DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 430 847 SO 029 703

AUTHOR	Flavin-McDonald, Catherine; McCoy, Martha L.
TITLE	Facing the Challenges of Racism and Race Relations: Democratic Dialogue and Action for Stronger Communities. 3rd Edition.
INSTITUTION	Topsfield Foundation, Pomfret, CT. Study Circles Resource Center.
PUB DATE	1997-00-00
NOTE	57p.; For a related guide, see SO 029 704.
AVAILABLE FROM	Study Circles Resource Center, P.O. Box 203, Pomfret, CT 06258; Tel: 860-928-3713 ($5).
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Education; Citizenship Education; *Community Action; Community Involvement; *Community Problems; Group Discussion; Learning Activities; *Racial Bias; *Racial Relations; Social Problems

ABSTRACT

This discussion guide considers the issues of racism and race relations in the nation and in its communities and recognizes the importance of public dialogue as a critical step in making progress on those issues. The discussion guide is designed to help organize and facilitate the kind of dialogue about racism and race relations that can make a difference in a community. Within study circles (small group, democratic, participatory discussions) people have the chance to get to know one another, consider different points of view, explore disagreements, and discover common ground. As a result of sustained interracial democratic dialogue, thousands of people from all races and ethnicities are working together to make strides on difficult race-related issues. Some of the issues include crime, community-police relations, race relations among young people, diversity issues, and connecting citizens to governance. Discussion sessions are: (1) "Race relations and racism: Experiences, perceptions, and beliefs"; (2) "Dealing with race: What is the nature of the problem?; (3) "What should we do to make progress on race relations?"; (4) "What kinds of public policies will help us deal with race relations?"; and (5) "How can we move from words to action in our community?" Additional sections address how to use the guide and material for further discussion and action is given. This discussion guide, used primarily for community study groups, could be used in the secondary social studies classroom to initiate discussions on the history of racism, conflict resolution, and citizen participation in the community. (BT)

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ED 430 847

Facing the Challenge of Racism and Race Relations:

Democratic Dialogue and Action for Stronger Communities

3rd Edition

SO 029 703

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Third edition

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The New Title

This guide is the third edition of a continually evolving document. The first edition was published in 1992, following the civil unrest in Los Angeles, and the acquittal of four white police officers in the beating of black motorist Rodney King. At that time, Rodney King issued a memorable call for racial harmony — "Can't we all just get along?" The question seemed to capture America's yearning for better race relations, and it challenged each of us to wrestle with America's race questions.

Rodney King's question made a powerful beginning for community conversations about race in America. Thus, the two previous editions of this guide were published under the title, *"Can't We All Just Get Along?" A Manual for Discussion Programs on Racism and Race Relations.*

Five years later, King's question remains relevant. But we have growing concerns about how it might be perceived, and we are concerned that it may not suggest the full complexity of the issue.

After much deliberation, we decided to change the title to more literally reflect the purpose of this guide. Accordingly, this third edition dons a new title, ***Facing the Challenge of Racism and Race Relations: Democratic Dialogue and Action for Stronger Communities.***

Facing the Challenge of Racism and Race Relations: Democratic Dialogue and Action for Stronger Communities

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FOREWORD

Issues of racism and race relations are critical in our country and in our communities. Today, a growing number of people are recognizing the importance of public dialogue as a critical step in making progress on those issues.

This discussion guide is designed to help you organize and facilitate the kind of dialogue about racism and race relations that can make a difference in your community. In study circles — small-group, democratic, participatory discussions — people have the chance to get to know one another, consider different points of view, explore disagreements, and discover common ground. In communities where study circles are ongoing and widespread, they are a way for people to work together democratically to actively address the issues they are facing.

In these community-wide study circle programs, in every region of the country, study circle organizers are showing the power of combining dialogue and action. As a result of sustained, interracial, democratic dialogue, thousands of people from all races and ethnicities are working together to make strides on some of the toughest race-related issues we face — bias crime, community-police relations, race relations among young people, diversity issues, connecting citizens to governance, and more.

This third edition incorporates many of the learnings from those programs. The final session of this guide — "How can we move from words to action in our community?" — demonstrates the kinds of actions that are coming out of study circles. This is a powerful testimony to what people can do when they have the opportunity to come together for democratic dialogue and action on questions of race.

But the work that must be done to address the challenge of racism and race relations has only begun. We urge you not just to read this guide, but to USE IT. Put study circles to work in your community, and adapt them to your needs. Contact us at the Study Circles Resource Center for assistance. We can share the lessons that other communities are learning, and put you in touch with others who are organizing similar programs. We also want to learn from you, so that we can more fully document the ways in which communities are using democratic dialogue to meet one of the most important challenges our country is facing.

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A NOTE ON LANGUAGE

DEAR READER,

We are writing this letter to share our thoughts about the language we use in this guide. *Facing the Challenge of Racism and Race Relations* is designed to help diverse groups of people talk constructively and inclusively about race. We have worked to make it open and evenhanded, so that it promotes the use of a democratic process in which *everyone* has a place in the conversation. But the guide is only a place to start. It is in the course of the dialogue that you will bring these materials to life.

It is hard to talk about race. Conversations are likely to touch on power and privilege, fear and anger, hope and disappointment. But when you approach them ready to listen and ready to share your thoughts, these discussions are well worth the effort.

Writing about race is also difficult, especially when the goal is to make everyone feel welcome in the conversation. We'd like to tell you how we grappled with three tough issues: the power of language; the need to be inclusive; and the unique dynamics of racial and ethnic relations in different regions of the country.

First, the language. What words contribute to a good discussion about race, and how should we name different groups of people? For example, should we use phrases like "people who are usually in the majority" and "people of color," or terms like "minorities" and "dominant culture"? We know these words mean different things to different people. Consequently, we use a variety of phrases in this edition. We hope that you will see this as an invitation to talk about language in your study circles, and to be open to finding words that work for you. In study circles, participants often explore the labels and descriptions people use, as well as the meanings and impact of different words. This guide provides the openings, but you do the rest of that important work.

We also faced another tough question: how can we make sure the discussions that this guide launches will be inclusive? For example, have the experiences of Arab American participants been overlooked? What about Jewish Americans? Where do people of mixed backgrounds fit in?

In this edition, we take into account the unique history of African-Americans in the United States. But it would be irresponsible to treat "race" as if it were only a black-white issue. People from all racial and ethnic backgrounds *must* have a place at the table. Therefore, we provide a broad range of examples and ask probing questions, inviting participants to speak about their own experiences and to give due consideration to others' experiences.

The most important thing you can do to foster inclusive discussions is to draw participants from all parts of the community. Only if study circles are diverse can you offer participants a real opportunity to examine a broad range of perspectives. Think about diversity in terms of *ideas* as well as identity. Try to include all kinds of people who share your community — whites and blacks, Asian Americans, Native Americans, Latinos, men and women, liberals and conservatives, young and old, rich and poor, and people of all faiths. While the discussion materials play a key role, remember that what you do to get the whole community involved is the heart of your work.

Finally, race relations differ from one region of the country to another. The guide's flexibility is one reason it has been able to accommodate these differences. Around the country — from Louisville to Los Angeles — the first two editions of this manual proved to be useful in communities of varying sizes, with diverse populations, all facing unique circumstances. If there are local issues that deserve special consideration in your community, we encourage you to build them into the discussion.

Since the first edition of this guide was published in 1992, it has been put to use in thousands of study circles across the United States. Participants, facilitators, and organizers from all over the country have given us valuable feedback. To all those who have shared their ideas and observations, thank you. We listened carefully, and have incorporated many of those insights into this new effort to create a catalyst for a full and fair discussion of race. We welcome your reflections on these materials so we can continue to improve them.

— The staff of the Study Circles Resource Center

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INTRODUCTION

An urgent need for democratic dialogue on race in our country and our communities

Race is a central issue in our nation and our communities. Even when we don't give voice to it, it is present — critical, but unspoken.

When we do talk about it, it is often at times of crisis, when racial divisions become apparent or racial tensions turn to violence. There are times of national awareness — the violence in Los Angeles in 1992, or the tensions following the O.J. Simpson verdict — when the country's problems with race transfix all of us. But when the tensions fade from view, our public recognition of race seems to go back into hiding, and we wonder if anything has changed at all.

A growing number of national and community leaders are starting to change that reality. They are calling for a dialogue about race that will help everyday people openly examine racism and race relations, and work together to make progress on this critical issue.

Those leaders realize that questions of racism and race relations touch us every day, in personal ways. Race affects where we live, where we walk, where we shop, the jobs we hold, and how we are educated. In workplaces, schools, and houses of worship, racial and ethnic divisions persist. Misperceptions, stereotyping, fear, and distrust exist in every ethnic group toward members of other ethnic groups.

Race also has a great impact on our public life. In our communities, racial and ethnic divisions prevent us from working together on pressing common concerns such as education, jobs, and crime. In our national public life, there is a longstanding stalemate on those policy issues that are directly related to our country's history of race relations. And, racial and ethnic concerns and conflicts underlie many other public issues.

Given our country's history, it is no wonder that race is so important today. Racism has played a key role for hundreds of years, clashing with our founding principles of equality and justice. The wars against Native American tribes and later discrimination against native peoples; the enslavement of Africans brought to this country and the oppression of African-Americans after they were freed; the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II; and discrimination against immigrants — all of these and more have been based on the belief that some people are inferior due to the color of their skin.

The struggle for racial equality has also played a key role in our history. In the civil rights movement, many Americans fought for racial justice. Attitudes and situations that were once the norm — racist statements by political officials, separate and inferior public institutions for blacks, the legal refusal to serve blacks in restaurants or to accommodate them in hotels — began to change as the result of heroic individual and collective struggles.

What about today? While almost everyone acknowledges that we have moved forward as a

result of the civil rights movement, many people are concerned that progress has stalled. Others fear that we are actually losing ground.

Though our perspectives vary, problems with race relations still loom large for our country. These problems are complex, defying simple definitions or quick solutions. All of us — from every ethnic and racial background — have had experiences that give us unique understandings of race and its impact on our personal and public lives. As an example, many whites believe that we have made a lot of progress on racial issues, that we are "almost there." At the same time, many people of color believe that we still have a long way to go.

On such a complex issue, with so many different experiences and understandings, how can we as a society make meaningful progress?

In a democracy, progress on race relations can happen when every person takes part in defining the problems and finding ways to work with others to solve them. At the heart of that participation is democratic dialogue, where people of all racial and ethnic backgrounds sit down together and have opportunities to:

- respectfully hear each other's experiences and concerns. In this way, people can come to better understand and appreciate others, rethink stereotypes and misperceptions, and build relationships.

- consider a wide variety of views. In this way, people can grapple with the many sides of public problems, come to a more complete understanding of the issues, explore disagreements, and search for common concerns. This openness lays a strong foundation for multifaceted community collaboration and problem solving.

- devise practical actions and strategies for addressing racism and race relations. Through the dialogue, people develop new community networks and new ideas for action at every level. In this way, they have the opportunity to fulfill the potential of their deliberation by working with others to make a difference.

A growing number of communities are creating and sustaining this kind of opportunity for democratic dialogue and action on race. They are finding ways to involve people from all races and ethnicities, all political beliefs, all faiths, all education levels, and all walks of life. They are also finding ways to help community members carry their dialogue forward from meaningful personal change into collective action. As more and more communities move ahead in this challenging work, our country will make the kind of progress on race relations that many of us have dreamed of for so long.

SESSION ONE

Race relations and racism: Experiences, perceptions, and beliefs

1

The purpose of this session is to share some personal experiences, stories, and perspectives about race relations, and to think about how race affects us on a day-to-day basis. It's not always easy to talk about race relations. A commitment to the study circle process — open, thoughtful, focused discussion — will help you make progress. By listening to one another's stories, we can gain insights into our own beliefs and those of others, and come to new understandings of the issues we face.

A note to the facilitator:

To manage time efficiently, many groups find that breaking this session into two parts is a useful strategy. Using a handful of questions selected from the list below, you might spend the first hour talking about personal experiences. In the second hour, ask the group to discuss the cases (see "Looking at the Cases"), which are concrete examples of everyday encounters where race may be at play. They are designed to help participants build a bridge between their own experiences and those of others.

Beginning the discussion

1. **Talk for a few minutes about your racial, ethnic, or cultural background.**
2. **Relate a story or give an example to illustrate how your background or experiences have contributed to your attitudes about race relations.**
3. **Have you experienced racism personally? Have you seen it in practice? How has it affected you or people you know?**
4. **In what ways do your attitudes toward persons of other racial or ethnic groups differ from those of your parents?**
5. **You probably have heard expressions of prejudice from family members, friends, co-workers, or neighbors. How do you think they learned their prejudice? How do you feel when you hear these expressions? How do you react?**
6. **How often do you have contact with people of other races or ethnic groups? under what circumstances — at work, at social events, in stores, in other places?**
7. **Do you have friends of other races? If not, why? If so, how did you get to know them?**
8. **How do you help your children deal with racism? How do you help them understand race relations?**

Looking at the cases

Read over the list of cases below. Choose a few to discuss. The following questions may be useful for your discussion:

9. **What is your first response to each of these cases?**
10. **What, if anything, do you think the people described in each case should do?**
11. **What, if anything, do you think organizations — such as businesses, congregations, and civic groups — should do?**
12. **What, if anything, do you think the government should do?**
13. **What, if anything, would you do if you were the person involved? if you were looking on?**
14. **Tell a story about something that has happened to you or a member of your family. Why is it important to you? Is it an example of a common experience, or not?**

Case 1:
A Latina woman does not get a job as a receptionist because she speaks English with an accent.

Case 2:
A white man who wants to be on the police force is not hired, while several minority applicants with equal scores on the qualifying test are hired.

Case 3:
A black couple tells their children to be extra careful at the shopping mall. The parents remind the children to stay together, and they also advise the children to keep receipts for everything they buy.

Case 4:
A recent newspaper article made public charges of discrimination that were raised against a local bank. An investigation of mortgage loan approvals revealed that rejection rates were higher for blacks and for biracial families, despite solid credit histories.

Case 5:
An environmental survey of a small city shows that poor minority neighborhoods have much higher levels of the kinds of pollution which cause health problems and birth defects.

Case 6:
An African-American woman who works at a mostly white corporation notes that some of her white co-workers are more likely to find fault with her when she wears braids in her hair and dresses in African fashions.

Case 7:
A group of African-American college students starts a new fraternity on campus. They hold parties and other events, and invite only other African-Americans.

Case 8:
An Hispanic man who works as a middle manager in a company is fired because his boss says he doesn't produce results. He claims the color of his skin was an important factor in this decision. He says he has always felt that he was being treated differently by his co-workers, but he has been afraid to speak out until now.

Case 9:
An Asian American woman has cosmetic surgery on her eyes so that they'll have a more "Anglo" look, feeling that she'll be more attractive this way.

Case 10:
A state university decides that it will no longer take a student's race into consideration when making admissions decisions. The next year, the number of nonwhite students entering the school drops sharply.

Case 11:
You and your date are walking to your car after seeing a late movie. You see a group of young black men coming toward you. They are wearing baggy clothes and talking loudly. Fearing a confrontation, you cross the street.

Case 12:
After a terrorist incident is featured in the news, a man who is from the Middle East feels that people are suspicious of him.

Case 13:
A Mexican American family tries to rent an apartment in a part of town that is mostly white. When they arrive to see the place, the landlord tells them he rented the apartment that morning. The family has doubts.

Case 14:
A white couple is looking for a house. Their real estate agent steers them toward houses in white neighborhoods, never showing them houses available in other sections of town.

Wrap-up questions

1. **Why did you decide to take part in this study circle program?**
2. **What would it take for these discussions to be meaningful to you?**

In preparation for the next meeting, think about the following questions:

When it comes to race, what problems are we facing?
What are the most serious challenges facing our community, and what are the community's greatest strengths for dealing with those challenges?

SESSION TWO

Dealing with race: What is the nature of the problem?

2

Many of us share a desire to improve race relations and to end racial inequality. But, when we are asked to describe the kinds of problems our society is facing with race, our answers vary a lot. We sometimes disagree about the nature of our racial problems, what caused them, and how serious they are.

It makes sense, then, to talk about what we are facing before we talk about solutions. This session presents a range of viewpoints to help participants have an open conversation that explores different understandings of our racial problems. Each view is written in the voice of someone who supports that position. The viewpoints are not presented as "truths"; rather, they are provided as a starting point for this discussion. Other viewpoints are likely to emerge as the dialogue unfolds. As you sift through the views, remember to give a fair hearing to the ideas that arise.

A note to the facilitator:

As you think about how you will use the time available, remember that the viewpoints are the heart of this discussion. To structure a two-hour discussion, you might spend 20 to 30 minutes discussing the questions under "Beginning the discussion," 60 to 80 minutes on "Looking at the viewpoints," and 20 to 30 minutes on the "Wrap-up questions."

To help participants talk more about our perceptions of progress, this session also offers another set of questions: "For further discussion: How far have we really come?" Some groups may decide to hold an extra session to address these questions.

Beginning the discussion

1. **Think back to what you learned in school about the history of race relations in this country. What made an impression on you? What do you think kids today should learn about the history of race relations?**
2. **As a group, use brainstorming to come up with some definitions for the following list of words: race, racism, institutional racism, and reverse discrimination. As you define these words, be sure to give examples where you can.**

Looking at the viewpoints

3. **Which one of the viewpoints comes closest to your own? Why? What other views would you add?**
4. **Imagine that you are in a conversation with a person who holds views that you oppose. What stories or personal experiences would you share to let that person know why you look at the issue the way you do?**
5. **Take a viewpoint that you disagree with, and try to make an argument in favor of it. What experiences, beliefs, and values might lead a reasonable person to support the views that are different from your own?**

What is the nature of the problem?

View 1:

History is at the root of the problem.

According to this view, certain groups of people were treated unjustly in the past, and the effects of that history are still with us today. For example, Native Americans and African-Americans have never had a fair chance to get ahead. When Europeans arrived on this continent, they banished Native Americans from their lands. As a result, many Native Americans live in extreme poverty today. Think about how much our treatment of African-Americans still affects us. Over a period of more than 300 years — more than 250 years of slave labor, and 100 years of Jim Crow segregation — blacks suffered horrible abuses. Because of this history, the group as a whole is lagging behind. Today, it may be possible for some African-Americans to get ahead, but it is unrealistic to expect everyone to "pull themselves up by their bootstraps." Though people today are not directly responsible for what happened in the past, our history remains a source of pain, injury, and conflict.

View 2:

The real problem is institutional racism.

According to this view, racism is firmly established in the institutions of our society. Power continues to be used in a way that favors whites and works against people of color. This happens in our businesses, agencies, government, the media, schools, the criminal justice system, and more. This kind of "institutional racism" can be direct

A note to the facilitator:

Before your group discusses the views, you may want to ask for volunteers to read each view aloud, or ask participants to read the views to themselves. As you go over the views, suggest that participants keep questions like these in mind: "What might be important to someone who holds this view? What are the pros and cons of this view?"

and intentional. For example, much of our housing was deliberately segregated on the basis of race. But institutional racism can also be indirect, unplanned, and hidden, which makes it even harder to deal with. For example, when a supermarket closes a branch in a poor urban neighborhood where many people of color live, they no longer have access to basic, essential services. While there are laws against racial discrimination, there are no laws against closing a store. In all kinds of ways, American institutions continue to limit opportunities for people of color and treat them as second-class citizens. It's been this way for so long that white people don't even know how much the system favors them.

View 3:
The problem is that many people of color lack economic opportunity.

According to this view, our real problems with race often come down to unequal money, jobs, and opportunities. Economic inequality makes our problems with race even worse. Some minorities have made economic progress, but there is still a long way to go. For example, people of color who are in the middle class still face barriers to advancement. And too many people of color live in poverty. Poor people in the cities, especially blacks and Latinos, live in an economic wasteland. They lack hope, good role models, good schools, and good jobs. The collapse of the low-wage economy has wrecked neighborhood businesses, and reduced the number of jobs for poor people who have few marketable skills. These people suffer the most from changes in our nation's economy — including the loss of manufacturing jobs. Without opportunities to get ahead, poor people in the cities are more likely to face other problems like drugs and violence, gangs, and teen pregnancy. It is too easy to think of race relations as a matter of "getting along better." People who are born poor, and who are not white, just don't have the same chances to make a good life for themselves.

View 4:
The problem is that too many people of color are not taking advantage of the opportunities available to them.

According to this view, internalized racism keeps many minorities from moving forward. Many people of color feel defeated by their race before they even try to succeed as individuals. Lacking confidence, some minorities expect too little of themselves — that is, their ambitions are often modest compared to their abilities. Because of the self-doubt that racism has helped to create, others engage in certain kinds of behavior that get in the way of their success. For example, drug use and irresponsible sexual behavior make it very unlikely that some people will succeed in school or at work. Still others seem to have just given up, because they see themselves as victims. In the worst cases, people of color try to use race to get special treatment, or they point to the country's history of race relations as a way of avoiding responsibility for their own actions. As long as people of color feel helpless or second-rate, they won't have the confidence to seize opportunities to get ahead. For that reason, our country will continue to have problems that fall along racial lines.

View 5:
Separation and prejudice are still our major problems.

According to this view, many of our problems exist because people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds live separately. We may see each other at work, but our lives are still

separate. We live in different parts of town, send our kids to different schools, attend different churches, and socialize at different places. Because we do not really know each other, there is a "knowledge gap," which is filled by images in the media. We cannot trust the media to show us what people are really like. Instead, what we usually see on television and in films are stereotypes — for example, "the intelligent Asian student," "the rough Latino gang member," "the African-American single mother on welfare," or "the empty-headed white." This only creates more prejudice. To make things even worse, we lack opportunities for people from different racial backgrounds to get to know each other. We also lack ways for diverse groups of people to work together on common problems. As long as we are strangers to each other, and don't see each other as part of the same community, our problems will continue.

View 6:

The problem is our lack of strong leadership.

According to this view, we lack leaders with real vision who can motivate and unify the many people who long for racial equality. Instead of uniting us, many of today's leaders tend to pull people of different racial and ethnic groups apart. Race continues to be a divisive issue because the loudest outcry about racism usually comes from public figures who talk about race just to stir up their audiences. Many white people are turned off by minority leaders who see racism in everything. Some powerful whites make racist remarks, which sicken people of color and make many whites feel ashamed. The bitterness on both sides threatens and alienates people who care about race issues. In the early days of the civil rights movement, leaders like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., brought people of different races together. Today, very few leaders are working to inspire those of us who are willing to work for equality and justice.

Wrap-up questions

1. **What is the nature of the problem with race in our community?**
2. **Over the years, what events have had the biggest impact on racial and ethnic relations in your neighborhood? in the community as a whole?**

In preparation for the next meeting, think about the following questions:

What can we do to make progress in our community?

When it comes to strategies to improve race relations and to eliminate racism, what sorts of proposals do you know about?

Try to identify a broad range of possibilities. What are the pros and cons of the various approaches?

For further discussion: How far have we really come?

The following series of questions is designed to help you consider each other's ideas about the progress we have made on race.

(a) As a group, examine this question: Over your lifetime, where have we seen progress in race relations? Make a list of signs of improvement.

(b) Take some time to review your list. Consider the reasons behind the progress you point out; make a list of your ideas about *why* you think we have been able to make progress in these areas. Is individual action or personal commitment the reason? Have government actions or policies played a role? Have private institutions been important? What else may be at work?

(c) Next, put together a list of signs that suggest we have not come as far as we might in improving race relations.

(d) Review your list together, and reflect on the reasons behind the lack of progress. Why haven't race relations progressed, or why have they stalled? Is individual responsibility the reason? Have government actions or policies played a role? Have private institutions been important? What else may be at work? Again, make a list of your ideas.

(e) Compare the two lists. What picture of race relations comes into view?

(f) What do we most need to work on in the country? in our community?

(g) What signs would you need to see to be convinced that we are making real progress on race relations?

SESSION THREE

What should we do to make progress on race relations?

3

Race is something we all deal with. Yet there is little consensus on what we should *do* about the racial problems we face. The goal of this session is to think and talk about possible directions for change.

The heart of this session is a range of viewpoints on how our society might address and make progress on race relations. The views invite you to consider a variety of approaches. Each is written in the voice of someone who supports that position. They are not presented as "truths"; rather, they are provided as a starting place for this discussion. Other perspectives are likely to emerge as the dialogue unfolds. As you sift through the views, the most important thing is to give a fair hearing to the ideas that arise.

Looking at the viewpoints

1. **Does one of the viewpoints, or some combination of views, come closest to your own? Why? What life experiences or values inform your perspective?**
2. **What view(s) are most distant from your own? What experiences, beliefs, and values might lead a reasonable person to support the views that are different from your own?**
3. **What are the strengths and weaknesses of each perspective?**
4. **What other viewpoints would you add to this discussion? What, if any, perspectives are missing?**

What should we do to make progress on race relations?

View 1:
We must fight prejudice, and build interracial understanding.

According to this view, we must work to improve racial understanding, end prejudice, and build solid relationships among people of different races. We need to be aware of the ways race affects our lives. Whites should think about the kinds of discrimination minorities still face on a daily basis. Whites also need to recognize the many privileges they have, just because they are white. For example, whites usually are not afraid that police will treat them unfairly just because of their skin color. People of color also have to play an active role in building bridges between the races. It's important for them to stay open-minded when white people reach out — personally, in the workplace, or in the community. All of us must speak out against prejudice or racism whenever we hear it or see it in action in our daily lives, among our friends, at work, or in public settings. Together, we can end prejudice by looking hard at our ideas about race, by building relationships across racial lines, and by refusing to tolerate racist behavior.

View 2:
We need to work together on common projects.

According to this view, people of all different racial and ethnic groups need to work as a team to improve the community. While we should not underestimate our differences, we should not make too much of them either. If we work side by side on issues that matter to all of us, we can move beyond stereotypes, and really learn to appreciate each other. Shared projects — a park clean-up, for example — remind us of the things we have in common. They show us that we can come together to make good things happen, and they remind us how much we need each other. Through neighborhood watch programs and community policing, we can help to reduce crime, get rid of drugs, and make families and business owners feel safer. Our ability to connect with each other, to build bridges across color lines, is basic to solving the problems we share. When we work on issues of mutual concern, we are doing the kind of multiracial work this country needs.

A note to the facilitator:

Before your group discusses the views, you may want to ask for volunteers to take turns reading each view aloud, or ask participants to read the views to themselves. As you go over the views, suggest that participants keep questions like these in mind: "What might be important to someone who holds this view? What are the pros and cons of this view?"

View 3:

We need to address institutional racism.

According to this view, we must confront the racism in our institutions, and promote fairness and equality. First, we need to identify and expose the racial bias which exists in many organizations. We should start training programs for people of all ages to make them more aware of racism and ready to resist it. But we have to change more than attitudes. We also have to find ways to change the policies and power structures in our society. We can try harder to hire and promote people of color so that they can share the power to make important decisions. And old-fashioned management styles should give way to newer approaches, which work better for diverse populations. Lastly, because racism helps to maintain the power and wealth of a few rich white people at the top, we should make our economic system work more fairly. If we want to destroy racism, we must look very carefully at our institutions, and make the needed changes at all levels.

View 4:

We must overcome our doubts, stop thinking of ourselves as victims, and take responsibility for our own lives.

According to this view, we need to admit how internalized racism still affects us all, and we need to get past it. The best way to undo the effects of racism is through individual accomplishments. We will make real progress on race-related issues only when people of all races accept responsibility for their own lives, and really strive to fulfill their potential. In the end, we can promote racial equality by holding everyone to the same high standards — in school, at work, everywhere. Only then will people of color feel truly confident in their abilities. We must think about what each person can do to solve our most pressing problems — such as crime and vandalism, babies being born out of wedlock, low academic achievement, drugs, and guns. We also need to talk about right and wrong. We should turn to our families and our faiths for moral guidance and positive examples. Solutions to our race problems will be found in the way we lead our lives and the kinds of choices we make.

View 5:

People of color need to find strength in their own values and traditions.

According to this view, people of color make the greatest strides when we band together and pool our resources. In the past, institutions rooted in our unique traditions have nurtured and empowered us. For example, the black church has been a great resource and inspiration for many African-American leaders. In the future, we should strive to build cultural, political, social, and economic institutions that appreciate and emphasize the richness of our own cultures. Decades of working, picketing, and praying for improved race relations have taught us that trying to educate racist people is not the best use of our energy. We should put our energy and talents to work where they are needed and valued, and where they benefit our own people. We may need to set up our own schools and businesses, and develop a new power base, so we don't have to fight racism wherever we turn. This may mean having very little contact with whites. When we focus on our own communities, we will draw strength from each other in a way that validates our heritages.

Wrap-up questions

1. **As you listened to others discuss what has shaped their views, what new insights and ideas did you gain?**
2. **What common concerns emerged in this discussion?**
3. **Which of the ideas raised here seem most promising? Why?**
4. **How do you think we can use the institutions in our communities (or in our nation) to make progress on race relations? What can our families do? religious groups? our schools? our businesses? the media? the government?**

For the next session, think about these questions:

When it comes to race, what direction should our public policies take?

What goals and values should shape our policies?

SESSION FOUR

What kinds of public policies will help us deal with race relations?

4

No one believes that the government alone has "the answer" to the race question. Still, almost every conversation about race relations comes around to public policies and their impact on us. Since policies affect race relations in our communities and our country, it is important to have a voice in determining their direction.

The purpose of this session is to begin a productive conversation on the general direction our public policies should take. What kinds of public policies will help us deal with race relations? This session presents a range of possible answers. The goal is not for participants to become experts in one particular policy area — say, affirmative action — or to agree on an answer. Instead, the goal is to "try on" the various views and learn from each other's ideas. Ultimately, this discussion will lay the groundwork for future actions we take and for our interactions with public officials at all levels.

A note to the facilitator:

Before your group discusses the views, you may want to ask for volunteers to read each view aloud, or ask participants to read the views to themselves. As you go over the views, suggest that participants keep questions like these in mind: "What might be important to someone who holds this view? What are the pros and cons of this view?"

Looking at the viewpoints

1. **Does one of the viewpoints, or some combination of views, come closest to your own? Why? What life experiences or values inform your perspective?**
2. **What view(s) are most distant from your own? What experiences, beliefs, and values might lead a reasonable person to support the views that are different from your own?**
3. **What are the strengths and weaknesses of each perspective?**
4. **Besides the ones presented here, what other kinds of policies would help us to reduce racism and improve race relations? What, if any, perspectives are missing?**
5. **What proposals would you like to see policymakers concentrate on? Why?**

What kinds of public policies will help us deal with race relations?

View 1:
Government should limit its efforts to enforcing laws against discrimination.

According to this view, the government's only obligation is to make sure that individuals of all races have a fair chance to compete for jobs, promotions, and admission to schools. It should not mandate "preferences" based on race because that is a form of discrimination. Even when preferential treatment is motivated by good intentions, it goes against our principles of fair play. Policies like affirmative action, which strive for equal results rather than equal opportunity, have gone too far. But there is an important role for government: enforcing the existing laws against racial discrimination. We already have good anti-discrimination laws that apply to housing, schools, jobs, and bank lending. These laws need to be better enforced. We should improve the government agencies that deal with discrimination, so that they can investigate complaints quickly and efficiently. By making sure the rules of the game are truly the same for everyone, regardless of race, the government will do a great deal to promote racial equality.

View 2:
We still need public policies that take race into account.

According to this view, race still needs to be a deciding factor in our public policies. First, we need to make racial equality a primary goal of public policies in all areas — education, jobs, housing, health care, transportation, and more. Second, we need policies that take race into account for hiring, school admissions, housing, and government contracts. By leveling the playing field, these policies help us deal with our long history of oppression and with current-day discrimination. Affirmative action, for instance, is moving us in the right direction. It has enabled minorities and women to make big gains. It has encouraged people to try harder to find qualified minorities, and it has provided opportunities for talented people to work to reach their potential. But 30 years of that policy is just a beginning; white men have been given preference in education, employment, and property ownership for hundreds of years. Until our country becomes a place where race doesn't affect a person's chances for success, we will need to take race into account in our public policies.

View 3:

We need public policies that will jump-start our urban economies.

According to this view, we need public policies that create more opportunities for people who are truly disadvantaged. In the middle and upper classes, there are many opportunities for people of all races to get ahead. But many minorities are trapped in poor urban communities where economic opportunities are scarce. Because of this, our policies need to move beyond affirmative action, which usually helps people who are already in a good position to make it on their own. Today, government should find creative ways to jump-start the inner city economy and create job markets that would employ the people who live there. We should reduce red tape and offer big tax breaks to people who are willing to invest in poor neighborhoods. State and city governments should make it easier to start and run small businesses. If there are ways for people to provide for themselves, the government won't have to play that role. And, with better job prospects, young people will not to be drawn to illegal markets like the drug trade. We are striving for communities built on the spirit of individual achievement, where race is not a determining factor. To get there, we need policies that make hard work pay off in every community.

View 4:

We should make reparations to African-Americans for slavery.

According to this view, our government has never acknowledged how wrong it was to legalize and condone slavery for so many years. We cannot put a bandaid on the deep wounds that are the source of today's racial inequality. In fact, an apology for slavery should be just a beginning. Slavery and its effects must be acknowledged and paid for. This could take the form of payments to descendants of slaves, such as free college education for several generations. We have done this sort of thing before. For example, the U.S. government apologized to Japanese Americans who were interned in camps during World War II, and paid reparations to them and their families. Making amends for past injustices is also important to other racial and ethnic groups, including Native Americans. Until we make amends to African-Americans, we cannot make real progress in race relations. We can only make progress if we pay our debts.

View 5:

We should review our policies for the racist assumptions they contain, and take that racism out.

According to this view, we should carefully examine our public policies, since many of them contain racist assumptions that we don't even notice. We must look at all kinds of policies, not just the ones that are specifically about race. Policies related to criminal justice, transportation, the environment, and education all need changes. In the criminal justice system, for example, people of color don't get a fair shake. Blacks and Hispanics receive much tougher sentencing than whites, for the same crimes. In addition, race is often a main reason that police become suspicious of someone; it is still legal to stop a person based on the color of their skin, because that person "fits the profile" of someone who would violate the law. And there is racial bias in how the death penalty is applied; we are, for instance, much more likely to execute people if their victims are white than if their victims are black. As for environmental policies, toxic sites are more likely to be located in areas where many people of color live. We should

start an education campaign to let people know that these sorts of biases exist. Our biggest task will be to create fair, non-racist policies that we can all support.

View 6:

We need policies that address social and economic inequality.

According to this view, we need to deal with economic insecurity if we want to reduce racism. When people of any race are worried about keeping a good job, they are more likely to resent or "scapegoat" people from other racial groups. Across the board, Americans worry about unemployment, job security, rising medical and housing costs, the quality of public education, and more. Our public policies need to address the serious economic gaps in our society, and help people understand and cope with a global economy. We should invest in public education, build affordable housing, provide universal access to good health care and child care, as well as access to pre-school and after-school programs. Public works projects would be a great way to provide good jobs to low-skill workers. We should also set up job training programs, based on need. These kinds of programs would benefit all of us, but they would especially help poor minorities. By making investments in all people, we will be able to make racial progress over the long haul.

Wrap-up questions

1. **What new insights or ideas have you gained from this discussion that might help you in the future? What areas of common concern have emerged during this conversation?**
2. **Besides the ones that we have addressed here, what other policy areas are important when it comes to race issues?**
3. **Which themes or concerns raised in this discussion also apply to local policy issues?**
4. **What direction should our local policies take? What key values should shape these policies?**

For next time:

What kinds of concrete steps can you take in your everyday life — by yourself and with others — to improve race relations in your community?

What do you think is most needed in this community?

Be sure to read over the "Action ideas and examples" before your group meets to discuss the materials in Session 5.

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For further discussion: Our values and our policies

Many people, even if they disagree about specific policy proposals, use the same terms to talk about the goals of our policies. The list below includes some of those terms. Is this the list you would make? What would you add?

"Our race policies should ...":

a) strive for fairness.
b) promote equal opportunity.
c) lead to the full inclusion of persons of color.
d) create a more compassionate society.
e) inspire responsibility.
f) promote diversity.
g) protect our freedom.
h) make up for past injuries.
i) promote core American values.
j) _____.

(1) If you were going to shape a public policy, where would you start? What would your goals be? Why?

(2) What do the items in the box mean to you? What values do you want race policies to promote?

(3) What personal experiences, values, or information shape your ideas?

(4) How attainable are your goals today? What stands in the way of reaching these goals?

(5) What sorts of current or past policies — for workplaces, schools, or governmental agencies — do you know of that do a good job of supporting the values that are important to you?

(6) When our values conflict, which ones should take priority? How would you set priorities for what we should do?

(7) What areas of common ground seem evident in your group? What sorts of guidelines would you recommend to policymakers?

SESSION FIVE

How can we move from words to action in our community?

5

While the racial issues we are facing in our communities sometimes seem overwhelming, it is possible to make a difference. By participating in this study circle program, you have already crossed the racial divide looking for better understanding and strategies that work.

Study circle participants follow up on their experience in many ways. Often they find that they share concerns. They sometimes find new partners, and work together to strengthen the community. The purpose of this session is to draw out ideas for steps we can take — as individuals, in groups, and as a whole community — to face the challenge of racism and race relations.

Get involved.

Act as an individual.

Work with groups in the community.

Start something new.

Keep the dialogue going (and growing).

> ***"We have seen that the study circle process changes hearts and that many actions flow from changed hearts."***
>
> *— Study circle organizer in Springfield, Ohio*

> ***"Being in study circles has given me a greater commitment than I already had to collective action."***
>
> *— Study circle participant in Aurora, Illinois*

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Beginning the discussion

1. **What major themes came up in the course of these discussions? What shared concerns emerged?**

Looking at the action ideas and examples

2. **For the following questions, think of action steps on three levels — that is, actions you can take as individuals, in small groups, and in institutions.**
   a) **What two or three ideas seem most practical and useful?**
   b) **What would it take to turn these ideas into reality?**
   c) **What resources are already in place that could help us move ahead?**
   d) **What else do we need to find out? What other groups should we link up with?**
3. **The struggle to improve race relations has a long history in this country. How has change come about? That is, what strategies and actions were most helpful in the past? What kinds of efforts are needed today? Why?**
4. **What current efforts in our community are helping people and institutions to work on race? Share stories or projects you know about. Are those efforts working? Why or why not? How can we join or build on the effective efforts that are already underway? What else can we do?**

A note to the facilitator:

In this session, your group members will fulfill the process of deliberation. Your job is to help them find ways to connect their discussions with specific action strategies.

You might begin by asking the group to recall what you covered in the previous sessions. With the participants, summarize the key points and themes that emerged in the earlier sessions (see question #1 above). Post the main points on a flip chart or chalkboard for all to see, or ask a recorder to keep careful notes.

Then, start a brainstorming session, using questions 2-4. Ask participants to think of action steps on three levels — steps that could be taken by (1) individuals, (2) small groups, and (3) institutions. Ask the group to throw out ideas for each category, and record them word-for-word on paper. (Don't stop to evaluate or judge the ideas at this point; the idea with brainstorming is simply to generate ideas.) When you're done, you'll have three lists.

Revisit the lists one at a time. Help participants hone in on a few favorites. (Questions like those listed under #2 can help focus this discussion.)

Finally, spend a few minutes discussing next steps. If an action forum is planned, talk about how your group will be represented. Do you need to identify a spokesperson? What will that person report? Ask the group to consider these questions:

- **What were the major problems or concerns raised in our study circle?** You might want to come up with a summary statement that names areas of general agreement and issues of common concern. Work together to complete this statement: "We agree that ..."
- **What ideas for resolving these issues seem most promising?**
- **What sorts of action should we take on these issues?** Again, you might come up with a summary statement for the following:
  "We suggest that the community as a whole should ..."
  "We suggest that small groups of community members should ..."
  "We suggest that individuals should ..."
- **What sorts of action will you take?**

Save at least 20 minutes at the end of the session for participants to talk about what their participation in the study circle has meant to them (see "Wrap-up questions"). It is important for participants to have a chance to look back, to assess how they've been affected by the study circles, and to hear how the program has influenced other participants. (Also, if there will be an action forum following the study circles, don't forget to encourage everyone to attend.)

Remember that all decisions to act are voluntary. People are likely to choose a wide variety of paths — from education and personal growth to strategic collective action. Some people may decide to channel their energies into future rounds of community-wide study circles. Volunteer opportunities in the community may attract others. If participants are interested in combining forces with others in the community, they may decide to take their ideas to an "action forum" (see the "Organizing for Action" section of this guide). The important thing is to give participants a chance to reach out, in their own way, and to realize they are an integral part of the larger community.

ACT AS AN INDIVIDUAL

1. Build interracial relationships.

— **Work one-on-one with the people who share your community.**

Example: In one study circle in Delaware, participants broke into interacial pairs, forming a summertime "buddy system" for simple outings — for example, going out to lunch or shopping.

— **Encourage your children to develop friendships with children from other backgrounds.**

Example: The Danneel Street children's playgroup in New Orleans, Louisiana, is sponsored by the activist group Erace. The group came about because parents were committed to introducing their kids to children of other races. Parent volunteers help coordinate the playgroup and supervise playtime.

— **Welcome new neighbors, and seek opportunities to meet newcomers in the community. Reach out, especially if they are from a different background than yours.**

— **Be a mentor to young people.**

Example: In Cambridge, Maryland, a handful of study circle participants volunteered to work on a tutoring program designed to provide mentors for minority students.

Example: In Hampton, Virginia, one study circle transformed itself into a working group to plan a "Diversity Day" for young people and a forum for the whole community.

2. Patronize businesses that have fair hiring practices.

3. Learn more about race and race relations.

— **Take a class on race, or on the history of race relations in the United States. Check out reading and video resources in your local library.**

— **Attend concerts, plays, and museum exhibits that relate to the themes of race relations and diversity.**

— **Listen to and share stories about personal and family histories that are related to the history of race relations in our country.**

— **Seek out information about race relations in your community and in the country. Check the facts. What do you know about the racial makeup of your community? Do your perceptions match the facts?**

4. Pay attention to politics in your community. Take leadership on race relations.

— **Approach top community leaders, and encourage them to foster public dialogue about race.**

— **Take leadership. You don't have to be an elected official, or a well-known civic leader to be effective.**

— **Speak up when people take positions that work against racial understanding and communication.**

> ***"It is important to recognize that there are many ways of solving a problem ... that action steps don't have to follow any formula."***
>
> *— Study circle organizer in Highland Park, New Jersey*

— **Find out about your representatives in government. Are all the people in your community well represented? Are your representatives responsible leaders on race issues?**

— **Vote, and encourage others to vote. As elections near, volunteer to work on voter registration drives, or work to get out the vote. Or, consider running for office yourself.**

Example: After participating in study circles, one group in New Jersey focused their efforts on local school board elections.

— **Get in touch with your representatives. Let them know your thoughts about the issues.**

WORK WITH EXISTING COMMUNITY EFFORTS, OR START NEW ONES

1. Find out what organizations or community programs are making progress on race, and volunteer for two hours each week.

2. Help faith-based organizations form relationships and work together.

Example: In many communities, study circles have helped to plant the seeds for further cooperation among religious organizations. For example, black and white ministers in Cambridge, Maryland; Utica, New York; Springfield, Massachusetts; Lexington, Kentucky; and Lima, Ohio, have used a variety of strategies to bring church communities together. They've paired congregations for study circles, arranged pulpit exchanges, and held joint services. (Contact SCRC for a copy of Study Circles in Paired Congregations: Enriching Your Community Through Shared Dialogue on Vital Issues.)

3. Respond to racial incidents when they arise in your schools, your community, and in the country.

Example: In some communities around the country, volunteers monitor incidents of racist violence and then help to develop community responses to them. (At the national level, the Southern Poverty Law Center's Klanwatch Project is one of the most well-known of these anti-racism campaigns. To receive more information, contact the Klanwatch Project, 400 Washington Ave., Montgomery, Alabama 36104.)

Example: Interracial teams of study circle participants from Springfield, Massachusetts, traveled to South Carolina to help rebuild a church that had been burned there. Over a period of several months, team members and local citizens held study circles on race relations while they rebuilt the church. By addressing both the physical and psychological damage inflicted by the arson, the project fought bias crime on a number of levels. (Contact SCRC for a copy of the discussion guide, *"When a church is burned in our town ...": A Guide for Community Dialogue and Problem Solving.)*

Example: Informal and formal student groups across the U.S. organize to fight racism on their campuses. They hold teach-ins, vigils, rallies, and discussions. Some of them organize to lobby for or against specific campus or governmental policies.

4. Use drama and art as a way to raise consideration of race issues in the community.

Community arts projects can take many forms: photo-text exhibits; video and audio "speak outs"; murals and other pieces of public art; cultural festivals; musical events; and interactive theater productions.

Example: City residents filled the Civic Center for Lima, Ohio's annual Community-wide Diversity Day. The organizations, community leaders, and citizens who had taken part in study circles planned, coordinated, and performed in the festivities. The poet Maya Angelou spoke movingly to the crowd, helping the city to celebrate its diversity and saluting the progress it is making through study circles.

Example: In Highland Park, New Jersey, a group of study circle participants got together to write a play about race relations in their community.

Example: An interracial singing group, called The Unity Choir, was started in Lima, Ohio, as a result of the study circles there.

Example: Following their first round of study circles in 1995, participants in Glen Ridge, New Jersey, organized a summer film festival to highlight diversity issues. Since then, the film festival has become a summer tradition.

Example: One outcome of the Springfield, Ohio, study circles was their "Culture Fest," a festival organized by the city and county to highlight and celebrate local ethnic cultures. The event featured bands, local artisans, performers, and many vendors. In addition, city and county schools sponsored storytelling from various cultural traditions. Over 75 volunteers worked with the city departments to make the event happen, and thousands of people turned out to take part in the festivities. Study circles were highlighted during the event, and people were encouraged to get involved in the next round.

5. Get people together to explore your community's history of race relations.

— Pull together a group of people to interview residents about the history of race relations in your community. Consider working with the local newspaper, or with a teacher at a local school or college. Students might create a documentary as part of their coursework.

— Organize a walk-through-history in your community. Ask different groups to select a site that is particularly important, and invite them to tell about the history associated with that location.

— Talk to the staff of your state humanities or arts councils to learn about artists, speakers, public programs, and publications. (Fees may be involved, but they are likely to be modest.)

Example: Through 1997 and 1998, the city of Wilmington, North Carolina, will coordinate a centennial commemoration of a period in the city's history that significantly affected race relations. Study circles on race will be part of this community's effort to acknowledge and address a painful part of their history.

Example: In June, 1993, *Hope in the Cities* and leaders of metropolitan Richmond, Virginia, hosted a national conference, *Healing the Heart of America: An honest conversation on race, reconciliation, and responsibility*. Residents of the former Capital of the Confederacy — from city and suburbs, both black and white— came together in an unprecedented walk through the city to acknowledge events and sites in the racial history of the community. (See the resource section for more information.)

Example: The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) is finding new ways to promote racial justice and improve race relations in the United States. An upcoming WILPF symposium will draw on lessons from the South African Truth and Reconciliation hearings and, during the course of the event, participants in small-group discussions will have a chance to talk about their experiences with race and race relations, and think about how to promote equality and reconciliation in this country. (For more information on WILPF's Racial Justice campaign, contact WILPF, 1213 Race Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107-1691, telephone: (215) 563-7110.)

6. Look for innovative ways to cross racial lines and support the development of businesses.

— After more than 400 people took part in study circles in Utica, New York, the *Observer-Dispatch* published a story on moving from talk to action. One suggestion: "Create a grass-roots network

to publicize private and public job openings, recruit qualified minority applicants, provide training in test-taking and conduct follow-up interviews after the application process, and if need arises, publicize instances of discrimination."

— Find ways to build interracial support systems and exchange information about shared business concerns.

Example: The **Mississippi Business Journal** reported that the Metro Jackson Chamber of Commerce initiated "Positive Links Uniting Sources (PLUS) " — a program to improve race relations in the region. Its goal is to foster business relationships between whites and minorities "by identifying joint venture projects, referrals, and networking opportunities."

7. Work across racial and ethnic boundaries on common problems.

Example: After their study circles, people in Lima, Ohio, got together to start a new food pantry, the Daily Bread Soup Kitchen, to serve needy people in the community.

Example: In Prince George's County, Maryland, study circle participants formed a committee to raise money for a local shelter.

Example: In Los Angeles, California, the Leadership Development in Interethnic Relations (LDIR) program, is helping people deal with a range of problems — from racially motivated fights in high schools to misunderstandings among neighbors. LDIR conducts skill-building programs on conflict resolution and collaboration to help people improve interethnic relations in their communities.

Example: In study circle programs around the country, multiracial coalitions are bringing diverse groups of people together to reduce crime and violence, to make an impact on youth issues, and to improve schools. (Contact SCRC for more information about these programs.)

8. Find ways to involve area businesses in improving race relations.

— Begin within your own organization by educating the staff about racism.

Example: Some college and university administrations sponsor racism and race relations workshops as part of their freshman orientation programs, or for faculty members. Many businesses sponsor diversity training programs for employees.

— Make workforce diversity a priority.

Example: In Springfield, Ohio, an alcohol and drug treatment agency gave its employees time during the business day to participate in study circles. One result of their study circles was a commitment to build a more racially-diverse workforce. Program directors have already steps to improve hiring practices.

— Look for ways to involve area businesses in study circle efforts.

Example: Study circle organizers in New Castle County, Delaware, are finding ways to work with community groups, academia, and major corporations like the Dupont company. Dupont has not only provided funding to support the local initiative, but also human relations diversity trainers to train facilitators to conduct the study circle workshops. A cooperative effort involves using study circles (on voluntary basis) as part of a business unit or function diversity awareness effort.

Example: As part of the executive loan program, an IBM employee was granted a one-year social service leave to coordinate a community-wide study circle program in New Rochelle, New York. Focusing on youth issues, almost 200 participants attended forums and took part in study circles to talk about violence, youth empowerment, and substance abuse issues.

9. Help improve race relations in your community's schools.

— Encourage teachers to include race issues in their lesson plans, or work to broaden the curriculum.

Example: In Highland Park, New Jersey, study circles organizers met with school administrators to talk about making study circles on race relations a part of the curriculum. In addition, "as a result of insights gained from the study circles," two newly-elected school board members explored ideas to create a more inclusive curriculum and review hiring practices in the schools.

Example: Around the country, teachers at all levels bring discussion of race relations into their classrooms. (Teaching Tolerance, a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center, provides teachers with resources for promoting interracial and intercultural understanding in the classroom. For more information, contact Teaching Tolerance, 400 Washington Avenue, Montgomery, Alabama 36104.)

Example: One study circle in Sioux City, Iowa, was concerned about whether the public school curriculum accurately reflects the history of minority groups and their contributions to the development of our nation. Members of the study circle met with the Curriculum Director of the Sioux City Community School District, who let them know that course offerings to be implemented in the fall of 1997 will address those concerns, and invited them to review the new curriculum.

Example: As a result of the study circles in Muncie, Indiana, participants organized a task force called People Against Racism (PAR) to work on issues of race with leaders from various sectors of the community. One of PAR's projects was the development a cosmetology program with the Muncie schools to provide education on hairdressing for different ethnic groups.

— **When language differences create challenges, work to improve communication between students, parents, and school administrators. Or volunteer to work with students and parents to strengthen their English or foreign language skills.**

— **Start a study circle program for youth in the schools.**

Example: Since 1994, the Springfield, Ohio Department of Human Relations, Housing, and Neighborhood Services has assisted a study circle program in the high schools, designed to promote interracial dialogue and cross-cultural understanding. So far, more than 800 students have been involved. Freshman are trained as facilitators, while upperclassmen and students from a nearby university serve as mentors to the new students.

10. Support or create community programs that bring together young people from diverse backgrounds.

Example: In Eau Claire, Wisconsin, a city-sponsored youth group formed a Teen Advisory Group (TAG) to recruit Hmong and white students to work together on student-led community projects.

Example: In New Rochelle, New York, organizers brought young people together to talk about "Youth Empowerment, Substance Abuse, and Violence." Coordinated by the local Volunteer Center of the United Way, in conjunction with the City of New Rochelle and the New Rochelle school district, this creative program interspersed large public meetings with study circles, using *Youth Issues, Youth Voices* (published by SCRC in 1996).

Example: Common Ground, a youth leadership program launched in Hartford, Connecticut, brings together area high school students for leadership training and community service. The program gives students an opportunity to learn how people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds can work together to address common concerns. Common Ground's student speakers lead workshops and discussion groups around diversity, youth empowerment, and community service. (For more information on how this program works, or for a copy of their newsletter, write to Common Ground, 250 Constitution Plaza, Hartford, CT 06103.)

11. Support or create programs that bring together people of diverse backgrounds.

Example: In Miami, Florida, a city councilman organized domino matches between people from different neighborhoods of the city. The tournaments brought together people from Little Havana and the predominantly African-American Black Grove, and helped to foster intercultural exchanges.

Example: An African-American woman, a newcomer to a Cleveland suburb, was disgusted by the racism she had experienced. Just when she was ready to move out, she began participating in a study circle organized as part of Greater Cleveland's "Honest Conversations" program. She found that others were receptive to her concerns and experiences, formed a number of relationships with people in the group, decided not to move, and is now one of the key organizers for the study circles in that community.

HELP KEEP THE DIALOGUE GOING (AND GROWING)

After you participate in a study circle, you can volunteer your services to the organizing team in a number of ways.

— Be trained as a facilitator, and help with future rounds of study circles in your community.

— Recruit friends, colleagues, and neighbors, and help organize new study circles in your neighborhood or in a local high school.

— Help get the word out. Let people know about the program, and how they can get involved.

— Find ways to involve young people in study circles. They might take part in the program as participants, or work as facilitators.

— Work on a study circle newsletter to keep people informed of new developments, to keep participants in touch, and to publicize the study circles.

— Help organize a "church pairing" program, bringing together congregations of different faiths and races to learn from each other and work together.

— Help seek additional support for the study circle program. Visit community leaders to tell them about the program, or volunteer to give a brief presentation at community meetings.

— Work with organizers to get the media, local businesses, public officials, and others to support your community's study circle program.

Example: Following an initial first round of study circles in Jeffersonville, Indiana, local businesses raised money for future study circles. Organizers from those businesses printed brochures and began aggressively recruiting people to take part in the expanding community-wide program on race relations.

Example: In New Castle County, Delaware, the local paper supported the study circle program by running *pro bono* advertisements. The ad issued a call to community members to do something to improve race relations, and it provided information on how to get involved with the study circles in the community.

Example: In January, 1994, Akron, Ohio's *Beacon Journal* issued a call to community members to do

whatever they could to improve race relations. More than 22,000 people responded to the paper's New Year's resolution challenge. The *Beacon Journal* also published a coupon, inviting organizations to express their interest in getting involved. More than 140 organizations returned the coupon, signing on as supporters of their community's effort to address race relations. (A similar strategy might work for a study circle program.)

— Organize other discussions on issues that came up in the study circles.

Example: In Glen Ridge, New Jersey, after participating in study circles on race, group members initiated community discussions about the Holocaust, in an effort to improve relations between people of color and Jewish community members.

— Help organize study circles on other important community issues.

Example: The success of widespread study circles on race relations in Lima, Ohio, led the community to expand the program and to address other issues.

— Since their study circles on race, the working group has organized community-wide study circles on crime and violence, as well as on youth issues.

Example: Maine's Roundtable Center has helped to organize study circles on a range of issues — abortion, economics, youth issues, diversity, what it means to be American, gay rights, and environmental issues.

Example: The first round of study circles in Syracuse, New York, focused on children's issues. Their second round focused on race relations and racial healing.

Example: In Oklahoma, study circle organizers (led by the League of Women Voters) sponsored a statewide program on criminal justice issues, and moved on to organize a statewide program on education.

Wrap-up questions

1. **How has your participation in the study circles affected your outlook on race relations in this community? How will it affect your involvement? Give specific examples.**
2. **How will you continue to make a difference on race issues in your community?**

"We must stop looking for one solution to our racial problems... The reality is that the problem has no single or simple solution. If there is one answer, it lies in recognizing how complex the issue has become and in not using the complexity as an excuse for inaction. In short,... we must attack the enemy on many fronts."

— Ellis Cose, Newsweek, November 25, 1996

USING THIS GUIDE

An overview of study circles

What is a study circle?

The study circle is a simple process for small-group deliberation. Some of its defining characteristics follow:

- A study circle is comprised of ten to fifteen people who meet regularly over a period of weeks or months to address a critical public issue in a democratic and collaborative way.
- A study circle is facilitated by a person who is there not to act as an expert on the issue, but to serve the group by keeping the discussion focused, helping the group consider a variety of views, and asking probing questions.
- A study circle looks at an issue from many points of view. Study circle facilitators and discusion materials give everyone "a home in the conversation," and help the group explore areas of common ground.
- A study circle progresses from a session on personal experience ("how does the issue affect me?") to sessions providing a broader perspective ("what are others saying about the issue?") to a session on action ("what can we do about the issue here?").

What is a community-wide study circle program?

Study circles can take place within organizations, such as schools, congregations, workplaces, or government agencies. *They have their greatest reach and impact, however, when community organizations work together to create large-scale programs.* These community-wide programs engage large numbers of citizens — in some cases thousands of people — in study circles on a public issue such as race relations, crime and violence, or education. Broad-based, cross-sector sponsoring coalitions create strong, diverse community participation. Participants in study circles have an opportunity to make an impact on an issue they care about.

How do community-wide study circle programs come into being?

Typically, a single organization such as a mayor's office, a school board, or a human relations commission initiates and staffs the project. In most communities, one organization takes the lead and approaches other key organizations to build a sponsoring coalition. Most community-wide programs have ten to thirty organizations as sponsors or endorsers. Grass-roots organizations such as churches, neighborhood associations, businesses, schools, and clubs often take part.

What are the outcomes of community-wide study circle programs?

By participating in study circles, citizens gain "ownership" of the issues, discover a connection between personal experiences and public policies, and gain a deeper understanding of their own and others' perspectives and concerns. They discover common ground and a greater desire and ability to work collaboratively to solve local problems — as individuals, as members of small groups, and as members of large organizations in the community. Community-wide study circle programs foster new connections among community members that lead to new levels of community action. They also create new connections between citizens and government, both at an institutional level and among parents and teachers, community members and social service providers, residents and police officers.

If you would like to know where community-wide study circles are happening, or where study circle coalitions are forming, please contact the Study Circles Resource Center.

Organizing study circles on race relations

Race relations are often at the heart of community issues, whether we are talking about education, economic development, human services, housing, or law and order. But the challenge is knowing how to get started, and how to approach an issue as complex as race.

As an organizer of a study circle program on race relations, you will provide a way for people to come together to address an issue that touches everyone. You will be working to welcome and include everyone in the conversation, and to let them know that the study circles

will be safe places where they can share their ideas, listen to others and be listened to, and work together to make an impact on the issues that affect their lives.

There are several key questions you need to consider before you get started.

What are you trying to achieve?

Keep in mind that study circles have many uses and many benefits. Through study circles, people can educate themselves, establish new relationships and new community networks, recognize ways to change their own behavior, cooperate with others to solve common problems, and help to create much larger political changes in their communities. Do you want your study circle(s) to help people achieve all or some of these benefits? Are there only one or two which interest you? What needs in your community do you think study circles might address? What kinds of benefits do you think the people you recruit will want to achieve? Your answers will help you grapple with the next question.

What will the scope of your study circle program be?

If you want your study circles to achieve all of the benefits mentioned above, from empowerment to community change, you must think big. To organize such a program, you will need to establish a broad-based organizing coalition and recruit hundreds of participants. You can, however, start small. Many large study circle programs begin with a single pilot study circle; some pilots have five to ten circles. Other programs start in a particular sector — pairing congregations, for example, or in one neighborhood. Try looking at the question like this: What will the scope of your program be in the short term? in the long term? Here are some of the possibilities:

1. A single study circle

How to begin: Invite ten to fifteen key people for three to six sessions.
Benefits: Mainly educational, creates new relationships, can affect individual behavior.
Possibilities: It can help you create an organizing coalition for a much larger effort.
Organizing effort: Minimal — One person can make this happen easily.
For help: Contact SCRC for a copy of "Starting Small, Thinking Big" in *Planning Community-wide Study Circle Programs: A Step-by-Step Guide.*

2. A set of study circles among young people

How to begin: Base your efforts at a high school or in a youth program, and create study circles involving young people and the adults who work with them.
Benefits: Basically the same as for a single study circle, but a set of circles can also affect the schools and youth programs involved.
Possibilities: Can be a stepping stone for a larger effort involving adults.
Organizing effort: Minimal to moderate — depends on the number of circles involved, but it will take time to organize, train, and coordinate the program.
For help: Contact SCRC for a copy of *Youth Issues, Youth Voices.*

3. A set of study circles involving paired organizations

How to begin: Start with the leaders of a network of institutions, such as churches, neighborhood associations, clubs, or businesses, and achieve diversity in each study circle by pairing the organizations.
Benefits: Basically the same as for a single study circle, but pairings can also affect the institutions involved, and perhaps have some impact on problems in the larger community.
Possibilities: You can build up to a community-wide program by first achieving success in particular sectors of the community.
Organizing effort: Moderate — This could involve several people from the participating organizations.
For help: Contact SCRC for a copy of *Study Circles in Paired Congregations.*

4. A community wide study circle program

How to begin: See "Basic steps in organizing a study circle program."
Benefits: Same as for a single study circle, but a community-wide program can also lead to problem-solving action by individuals, small groups, large organizations, and the community as a whole. These programs can also have a profound effect on people's sense of community.
Possibilities: Can lead to permanent mechanisms for public deliberation and problem-solving.
Organizing effort: Considerable — Large programs with many circles across sectors of a community take the coordinating effort of several people or groups.
For help: Contact SCRC for a copy of *Planning Community-wide Study Circle Programs: A Step-by-Step Guide.*

Basic steps in organizing a community-wide program

Study circle programs that create opportunities for dialogue across an entire community require a strong organizing effort. To ensure broad community involvement, consider these basic steps:

1. Find an ally or two.
2. Build a coalition of community leaders from various organizations and agencies that represent many segments of the community. Think about partnering with organizations that you don't always work with. Be sure to include organizations that have the staff, resources, and media clout to pull the program together, along with other organizations whose main resources are potential study circle leaders and participants (for example, churches, Chambers of Commerce, local governments, education institutions, and neighborhood associations). In particular, reach out to organizations and people who don't normally get involved in community activities. Ask yourself who is missing from the group, and then invite them to get involved .
3. Hold a pilot study circle with this core group of people. As this group expands, continue to use pilot study circles to give the new recruits an understanding of the process and the ability to talk about it from personal experience.
4. Decide how your coalition will handle the overall coordination of the program. The coalition will need to:
   a. Find a coordinator or coordinators, either paid staff or volunteer.
   b. Find, recruit, and train facilitators. These might be members of co-sponsoring organizations, people who have been trained in mediation or conflict resolution, or members of local leadership development programs. The continuing education department of a nearby university, or the local community education association, may be willing to organize the training.
   c. Set the timeline. The study circles should meet within a two or three-month period so that all of the study circles are going on around the same time.
   d. Think about logistics. This includes such things as suitable sites with convenient parking (often found in churches, libraries, schools, union halls), food, child care, transportation, wheelchair accessibility, flip charts or tablets, and other supplies.
   e. Begin working with the media. Explore ways to involve local media in a variety of ways including publicity, news, editorials, public service announcements, etc. Newspapers or television stations might consider joining the coalition as full partners.
   f. Make arrangements for an evaluation effort. Look to universities or other organizations who might be willing to help you assess your program.
   g. Plan the kickoff event. This will be an opportunity for the coalition to broadcast the call for dialogue to potential study circle participants, generating media coverage and greater community visibility.
   h. Start thinking about an action forum. Set a date early, and let the people who are involved in the program know about your plans so they can save the date.
5. Recruit participants from a broad cross section of the community. This is easier, of course, if your working group is representative of the community and can recruit from its ranks.
6. Hold the kickoff event. This event gives you an opportunity to let participants know that they are part of something big. Include high-profile speakers, an explanation of what study circles are, testimonials from pilot study circle participants, and breakout study circle sessions.

— STUDY CIRCLES BEGIN
ALL OVER THE COMMUNITY —

7. Coordinate and support the study circles. Work to achieve diversity in each circle. Bring the facilitators together periodically to debrief and share successes and challenges. (Instead of allowing people to join circles that have already formed, collect names of latecomers to form new groups.)
8. Plan an action forum. This should be a large meeting where study circle participants report to the larger group on their action ideas, have a chance to sign up for task forces where they can work on implementing those ideas, and celebrate their experience.

— STUDY CIRCLES CONCLUDE —

9. Hold an action forum. As the task forces take on action projects, find ways to publicize and strengthen their efforts.

For more details, ask SCRC for a copy of
Planning Community-wide Study Circle Programs: A Step-by-Step Guide.

Organizing for action

The opportunity for participants to take action is a key component of a successful study circle program. After taking part in a study circle program, people can take action on a variety of levels — as individuals, in small groups, in organizations, or as part of a community initiative. Early on, organizers should begin to think about how to provide opportunities for study circle participants to come up with action ideas and put them into practice. Even with limited resources, study circle organizers often use innovative strategies to help participants plan for and implement action steps.

Here are some suggested ways to organize your program to help participants move forward on community problem solving:

(1) At the outset of your program, organize a committee to work specifically on action issues. You might seek volunteers from a range of places in the community, or you might ask people on your coalition or in your working group to head up action initiatives.

> *Example:* **Nashville, Tennessee's** study circle coalition includes the YWCA, Urban League, National Conference, Vanderbilt University, St. Thomas Hospital and Nashville Coalition Against Racism (NCAR). The organizations on the coalition divided up responsibilities. The National Conference took responsibility for media promotion. Vanderbilt University and St. Thomas Hospital provided training and meeting space for the program. The Nashville Urban League took on the action component of the program.

(2) Find or create a directory which lists existing efforts to address community problems. If a directory of community programs and volunteer opportunities does not already exist, develop a directory for your town, and make it available to study circle participants. That way, people who want to offer their services will know where their help is needed. Put a copy on display at your local library, in supermarkets, wherever people gather. Ask local business and town officials to help you distribute it.

> *Example:* In **Bridgeport, Connecticut,** study circle organizers created a simple directory listing area services and programs. They have found that this is a good way to connect would-be volunteers with ongoing community service projects.

(3) Pave the way for study circle participants to move into volunteer positions. Find out where volunteers are needed. Talk to people who could use help, and make sure organizations in the community are ready for new volunteers. Let community organizations know that participants are likely to come out of the study circles energized and ready to work in the community.

> *Example:* **Youngstown, Ohio** study circle organizers found that working with existing action groups helped to strengthen their capacities, energize participants, and create a collaborative setting for community work on race relations.

(4) Prepare for and publicize an action forum. The action forum is an excellent method for moving from talk to action. After a round of study circles finishes, participants from all of the study circles are invited to come together to celebrate, and to figure out how they will work to make a difference in the community. An action forum is an effective way to involve them in strategizing about how to get more people involved in the study circles. It's also a chance to remind participants that they are part of something bigger — that they are part of a community-wide effort. This kind of event is a good way to

How can you find the resources you need?

By providing discussion materials and advice on organizing, the Topsfield Foundation and SCRC cover some of the costs of a community-wide program. In financial terms, therefore, study circle programs usually aren't expensive for organizers. However, organizing study circle programs is labor-intensive. In fact, the largest single expense is usually the cost of funding a study circle coordinator. Programs solve this challenge in a variety of ways: sometimes an organization in a study circle coalition allows one or more of its employees to do study circle work full-time; sometimes a coalition looks for funding from a community or private foundation; sometimes a company lends an executive, or a university assigns a graduate student to coordinate study circles for credit. Most of the other resources required for a program — such as training — can be provided in-kind by the organizations in the study circle coalition.

let participants and other community members know how the program is making a difference in other people's lives and in the community. (Contact SCRC for more information.)

Let participants know the date and time of the action forum well in advance. This will give them plenty of time to plan ahead, and show them that study circles are more than "just talk."

> *Example:* In **New Castle County, Delaware,** organizers invited study circle participants to an "Action Forum and Reunion Celebration." At the outdoor forum, a band played and public officials offered words of support to participants. Then, participants were invited to join task forces on four different issues: (1) Reaching our children: racism and the school system; (2) Expanding the dialogue and orienting newcomers; (3) Penetrating institutional racism: the media and affirmative action; (4) Deepening our knowledge and skills. At the forum, the groups came up with action plans, set the date and time of their next meeting, and reported back their main ideas and plans to the plenary group. Organizers are planning the next round of study circles, and they are looking for ways to keep people informed about the work the task forces are doing.

(5) Set up a system for participants to report back on action steps. Ask them to keep you informed about their activities. That way, you'll know more about the outcomes of your program. And, as the study circles continue, you can invite newly-energized people to join the action groups in progress.

(6) Involve participants in efforts to expand the program. As participants come out of study circles, find ways to involve them in maintaining and expanding the study circles. Participants are often eager to find ways to involve more people in public dialogue about race. Study circle participants might go on to:

a) be trained as facilitators.
b) help organizers to recruit for the next round.
c) help coordinate events such as kickoffs and action forums.
d) start a study circle newsletter to keep people informed of new developments, to keep participants in touch, and to publicize the study circles.

> *Example:* Newsletters have been started in study circle programs in the Twin Cities, Minnesota, Portland, Maine, Aurora, Illinois, Miami, Florida, and Prince George's County, Maryland, Southern Indiana, and Iowa.

e) organize a "church pairing" program, bringing congregations of different races together to learn from each other and work together.
f) work with organizers to get the media, local businesses, public officials, and others to support your community's study circle program.

Working with public officials

Organizers of study circle programs say that candid, face-to-face conversations about race need to take place not only among community members, but also between citizens and the public officials who represent them.

A wide variety of public officials — from mayors and city councilpersons, police chiefs and school superintendents, to state legislators and U.S. Representatives — have reaped benefits from their participation in study circle programs. For their part, public officials offer a unique kind of support to programs, helping to raise visibility, helping to recruit a broad range of people, and helping participants to take action on the issues they face. The result is a collaborative relationship which can galvanize problem solving in the community.

For more information and assistance, contact SCRC. If you are particularly interested in working with your U.S. Congressional Representative or Senator, contact SCRC's "sister organization," Congressional Exchange. Phone: (202) 393-1441. Fax: (202) 626-4978. E-mail congex@congex.org.

Adapting this guide:
Bringing important community issues into your discussion

While this guide covers many of the ideas and proposals that people often raise when they deal with race relations, there are probably local aspects of the issue that could use more in-depth exploration. This guide is flexible and can be adapted to help you talk about your community's unique concerns. You can use a number of different strategies to build local issues into your discussions. Depending on your needs, you may want to try one of the following:

- Write a new foreword to the guide to present the local context for the study circles. You might spell out the reasons for the program, mention the supporting organizations, describe the scope of the program (including the number of people you want to involve), and give an overview of future plans.
- Develop a community directory, listing local programs, organizations, and volunteer opportunities in the community.
- Include readings that specifically address your community's experience with race relations.
- Compile an evenhanded data supplement — for example, basic information about the demographic characteristics of people in your community, or an overview of your town's budget.
- Write a new session that focuses on a matter of local concern.

As you think about what might work in your community, there are two things you should keep in mind. First, any supplemental information you include should be accessible and easy to digest. Try to provide something that will spur discussion and encourage people to find out more, rather than something which is weighty and comprehensive. Second, whatever you provide must reflect a range of viewpoints on the issue. This goes for everything, even statistics. To help your group go beyond the typical poles of the debate, present views and information that will make everyone feel welcome in the conversation.

Writing a new session

People frequently ask how to write a session focusing on a local issue. The "game plan" below is designed to help you to frame the issue and structure your conversations in a fair, open, and productive way.

Determining the topic of the session

What question will your custom-made session address? *When you select an issue, make sure it is an issue of general concern in your community — something that has broad appeal, and feels important to all sorts of people.* If a particular issue is on the front burner in your community, you may wish to devote one or more sessions to exploring that issue alone. People may be eager to talk about a local controversy or crisis. Or, you may want to dedicate a session to exploring local policy issues. Whatever you decide, your first task is to settle on an overarching question for the session that will allow you to explore varied points of view and possible solutions.

Before you decide on the topic of the session, you'll want to hear from all sorts of people about the issues facing your community. Meet with people you don't usually talk to, as well as friends, family members and co-workers. The broader this group, the richer and more varied the answers will be. *Be open to people's ideas, and ask probing questions to get at the reasons behind their views.* To make sure you cover the range of views adequately, you'll have to do a bit of detective work. Possible

Good discussion materials should ...

- cover a broad range of views, and present each viewpoint in the voice of a reasonable person who supports the view.
- encourage people to analyze the basic assumptions and values that underlie their views, and help people understand each other's views.
- connect personal experience with public issues, and give people a sense that their experiences count.
- convey the idea that, by working together, we'll gain a more accurate picture than we can by ourselves.
- help people find common ground.
- help people move to action.
- lead to good, productive discussions.

strategies for involving a broad range of people include the following:

1. Consider bringing together a diverse group of people to do a brainstorming exercise. Ask them about their views, and explore the ideas behind their views.
2. Talk to everyday people — for example, neighbors, kids, grandparents, librarians, gas station workers, taxi drivers, and waiters.
3. Read the local paper, and follow the local news. The opinion and editorial pages can be a great resource. Also, consider talking with journalists or the editor of the local newspaper, and ask about the kinds of views they hear on the issue.
4. Talk to local leaders — for example, public officials, business people, religious leaders, activists, and teachers.

Use questions like these to shape your research:

- What are the most important local issues that we need to address in order to make progress in race relations? How does race affect our community?
- How would you describe the nature of the problem with race in our community? Why? What caused the current situation? What is the history of this issue in our community?
- What would it take to fix the problems? How should we go about making progress?

Framing the issue

In simple terms, a viewpoint is a believable answer to the question at hand. To frame a series of viewpoints, boil the ideas you've heard down to key points, and summarize the thinking behind those ideas.

As a writer framing viewpoints, you are trying to stand in other people's shoes, because you want to present their points of view in a convincing way. Because you are trying to speak for other people, it is very important to frame the views quickly. After you've completed a simple frame of viewpoints on the issue — a sentence outline — begin sharing it with people, and ask for feedback. This is an extremely important part of the process. (Don't hesitate to share your early drafts! Working collaboratively on the writing makes for a much better final product, and saves time all the way along.) After others have reviewed the outline, and when you are confident that you've captured the main views, spend some time "fleshing out" the views, and crafting language.

As you write, the first rule to keep in mind is this: *Your job is to help people consider a range of ideas, not to promote any one point of view.* It is also your job to make other people's ideas accessible to all sorts of people. As you write the views, remember to be brief, to use plain language, and to strive for a balanced presentation.

Develop a list of discussion questions.

Write the questions carefully. The questions should be concise and easy to understand, but not too easy to answer. Since you're trying to draw people out, it's a good idea to avoid questions that can be answered with a simple "yes" or "no." They should invite all sorts of responses. Use the questions in this guide to help you draw up new questions for this session. For example:

- What are we facing? How has the issue affected your life? What are our different experiences and concerns with regard to this issue? How do different racial and ethnic groups experience the issue? Are there differences within particular groups?

How SCRC can help

If you are considering writing a new session or developing new study circle materials for a community-wide program, please let us know. We'd be happy to brainstorm with you as you try to outline the material and frame the issue. We can also read and comment on any drafts that you send us. (Please try to give us plenty of lead time!) Also, contact SCRC for examples of the different strategies other communities are using to adapt this guide.

SCRC's *Planning Community-wide Study Circle Programs: A Step-by-Step Guide and our Guidelines for Creating Effective Study Circle Material* may also be helpful to you. Contact SCRC for copies of these guides, or copies of our discussion guides on youth issues, crime and violence, criminal justice, education, and diversity.

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- What is the nature of the issue? What are the usual terms of the debate? How does race figure in the debate? What place should it play?

- Which of the views is most like your own? What personal experiences and values have shaped your opinions? What values do others hold? What would lead reasonable people to hold these views? What are the pros and cons of the different views? What perspectives are missing?

- Where have we gotten "stuck" in dealing effectively with this issue? Where have we succeeded so far?

- What are some alternative approaches to dealing with this issue? How does each of these approaches deal with racial inequality or racial divisions?

- What new insights have you gained from listening to others in the group?

- What are some specific next steps we can take to address our concerns about the issue?

Tips for study circle leaders

A study circle leader does not need to be an expert (or even the most knowledgeable person in the group) on the topic being discussed, but should be the best prepared for the discussion. This means understanding the goals of the study circle, being familiar with the subject, thinking ahead of time about the directions in which the discussion might go, and preparing the discussion questions to aid the group in considering the subject. Several of the sessions in this guide offer more options for discussion than you can cover in two hours, which is the normal length of each session. Choose the options that you think will be most interesting and relevant to your group. (You may want to consider having extra meetings.) Solid preparation will enable you to give your full attention to group dynamics and to what individuals in the group are saying.

Stay neutral!

The *most important* thing to remember is that, as a facilitator, you should not share your personal views or try to advance your agenda on the issue. You are there to serve the discussion, not to join it.

Set a relaxed and open tone.

- Welcome everyone and create a friendly and relaxed atmosphere.
- Well-placed humor is usually appreciated.

Establish the purpose of the study circle, and help the group establish ground rules.

At the beginning of the study circle, remind everyone that the purpose of the study circle is to deliberate on the issue at hand in a democratic and collaborative way. Also remind them that your role as leader is to remain neutral, keep the discussion focused, and guide the conversation according to the ground rules.

Start with the basic ground rules listed below, then ask participants to add their own ideas.

- All group members are encouraged to express and reflect on their honest opinions. All views should get a fair hearing.
- Though disagreement and conflict about ideas can be useful, disagreements should not be personalized. Put-downs, name-calling, labeling, or personal attacks will not be tolerated.
- If someone says something that offends another member of the group, even if inadvertently, people should feel free to explain how the comment affected them. (Some groups call this the "Ouch, then educate" principle.)
- It is important to hear from everyone. People who tend to talk a lot should make special efforts to give others the opportunity to express their views.

Stay aware of and assist the group process.

- Always use your "third eye." You are not only helping to keep the group focused on the content of the discussion, but you will be monitoring how well the participants are communicating with each other — who has spoken, who hasn't spoken, and whose points haven't yet received a fair hearing.
- Consider splitting up into smaller groups to examine a variety of viewpoints or to give people a chance to talk more easily about their personal connection to the issue.
- When wrestling with when to intervene, err on the side of nonintervention. Don't allow the group to turn to you for the answers.
- Resist the urge to speak after each comment or answer every question. Allow participants to respond directly to each other. The most effective leaders often say little, but are constantly thinking about how to move the group toward its goals.
- Once in a while, ask participants to sum up the most important points that have come out in the discussion.
- Don't be afraid of silence! People sometimes need time to think before they respond. If silence feels awkward to you, try counting silently to ten before you rephrase the question. This will give people time to collect their thoughts.
- Don't let anyone dominate; try to involve everyone.
- Remember that a study circle is not a debate but a group dialogue. If participants forget this, don't hesitate to ask the group to help reestablish the ground rules.
- Keep careful track of time!

Help the group grapple with various points of view.

- Your role as facilitator requires that participants see you as impartial and fair, not favoring any one point of view.
- Use these written materials to help participants consider a wide range of views. Rely on the guide rather than presenting something as *your* idea. Referring to the text helps you maintain your neutrality. You might ask participants to consider a point of view that is underrepresented in the discussion. Ask the group to think

about the advantages and disadvantages of different ways of looking at an issue or solving a problem.

- Ask participants to think about the concerns and values that underlie their beliefs.
- Don't allow the group to focus on or be overly influenced by one particular personal experience or anecdote.
- Help participants to identify "common ground," but don't try to force consensus.

Ask open-ended questions that don't lend themselves to easy answers.

Familiarize yourself with these questions. They are a great resource during any study circle.

- What seems to be the key point here?
- What is at the heart of your disagreement?
- Does anyone want to add to (or support, or challenge) that point?
- Could you give an example or describe a personal experience to illustrate that point?
- Could you help us understand the reasons behind your opinion?
- What experiences or beliefs might lead a reasonable person to support that point of view?
- What do you think is really important to people who hold that opinion?
- What would be a strong case against what you just said?
- What do you find most persuasive about that point of view?
- What is it about that position that you just cannot live with?
- Are there any points on which most of us would agree?

Close with a summary of the discussion. Provide time for evaluation, and set the stage for the next meeting.

- Give participants a chance to talk about the most important thing they gained from the discussion. You may wish to ask participants to share any new ideas or thoughts they've had as a result of the discussion.
- If you will be meeting again, remind the group of the readings and subject for the next session.
- Thank everyone for their contributions!
- Provide some time for the group to evaluate the process in writing. A brief written evaluation allows participants the chance to comment on the process and give anonymous feedback to the facilitator.
- If the groups are meeting with the intention of having an impact on community decision making, be sure to document the content of the discussions. In some study circles, participants record common concerns and points of agreement and contention, as well as ideas for action steps.

Be aware of the dynamics of cross-cultural communication.

- Awareness of cross-cultural dynamics is always useful in a study circle setting, but this is especially true when race issues themselves are the subject of conversation.
- Even though some of the conversation inevitably revolves around differences, set a tone of unity in the group. While our differences may separate us on some matters, we have enough in common as human beings to allow us to talk together in a constructive way.
- Facilitating in pairs is often helpful in study circles on race relations. Having co-moderators from different demographic groups can help establish unity. For example, the co-facilitators could be a man and a woman, a white person and a person of color, an adult and a young person, a manager and a clerical assistant. Furthermore, a newly trained facilitator is likely to learn a lot from an experienced facilitator who has first-hand knowledge about how cross-cultural dynamics can work in a study circle.
- Sensitivity, empathy, and familiarity with people of different backgrounds are essential qualities for the facilitator. If you have not had the opportunity to spend time in a broadly diverse setting, get involved in a community program that gives you that opportunity and helps you understand cross-cultural dynamics.
- Help people to appreciate and respect their own and others' communication styles. People's cultural backgrounds affect the ways in which they communicate. For example, some cultures tend to be more outspoken and directive, while others are more reserved. Some cultures value listening more than speaking. In other cultures, taking a stand is of utmost importance. Help group members to realize there is no "right" way to communicate, and that understanding one another takes practice! Your leadership should demonstrate that each person has an important and unique contribution to make to the group.
- Don't let participants' awareness of cultural norms lead to stereotyping. Generalizations don't necessarily apply to individuals within a culture.
- Remind the group, if necessary, that no one can represent his or her entire culture. Each person's experiences, as an individual and as a member of a group, are unique and valid.
- Encourage group members to use their own experiences

as they attempt to empathize with those who have been victims of discrimination — in the workplace or elsewhere. Many people who have been in a minority group have experiences that make this discussion a very personal issue. Others, particularly those who are usually in the majority, may not have thought as extensively about their own culture and its effects on their lives. To aid this, you may want to encourage people to think about times in their own lives when they have been treated unfairly. Be careful not to equate the experiences. Instead, try to draw on them to help participants identify with the kinds of treatment others have encountered in their lives. For those study circle participants who are currently at the receiving end of mistreatment, this could seem invalidating unless you explain that you are trying to build empathy and understanding among all members. Remind people that no one can know exactly what it feels like to be in another person's shoes.

- Encourage group members to talk about their own experiences and cultures, rather than other people's. In this way, they will be less likely to make inaccurate generalizations about other cultures. Also, listening to others recount their own experiences breaks down stereotypes and broadens understanding.

Tips for study circle participants

The goal of a study circle is to grapple with complex public issues in a democratic way, so participants can better understand those issues and find ways to make a difference on them. The process — democratic discussion among equals — is as important as the content. In a safe, focused discussion, people exchange ideas freely and consider a variety of views. Study circles seek common ground — that is, areas of general agreement — but consensus or compromise is not necessary. By uncovering shared concerns and coming up with practical strategies, people often find they can work collaboratively to improve their community.

The following points are intended to help you make the most of your study circle experience:

- Make a good effort to attend all meetings. The comfort level and depth of conversation depend upon familiarity with other participants.
- Think together about what you want to get out of your conversation.
- Help keep the discussion on track. Make sure your remarks are relevant.
- Speak your mind freely, but don't monopolize the conversation.
- Really try to understand what others are saying and respond to their ideas, especially when their thinking is different from yours. (In other words, seek first to understand, then to be understood.)
- Be open to changing your mind. This will help you really listen to others' views.
- When disagreement occurs, don't personalize it. Try to identify the ideas that are in conflict. Search for the common concerns beneath the surface.
- Don't waste time arguing about points of fact. For the time being, you may need to agree to disagree and then move on. You might decide to check out the facts together before your next meeting.
- Value one another's experiences. Think about how your own experiences have contributed to your thinking.
- Help to develop one another's ideas. Listen carefully, and ask clarifying questions.

A comparison of dialogue and debate

Dialogue is collaborative: two or more sides work together toward common understanding.

Debate is oppositional: two sides oppose each other and attempt to prove each other wrong.

In dialogue, finding common ground is the goal.

In debate, winning is the goal.

In dialogue, one listens to the other side(s) in order to understand, find meaning, and find agreement.

In debate, one listens to the other side in order to find flaws and to counter its arguments.

Dialogue enlarges and possibly changes a participant's point of view.

Debate affirms a participant's own point of view.

Dialogue reveals assumptions for reevaluation.

Debate defends assumptions as truth.

Dialogue causes introspection on one's own position.

Debate causes critique of the other position.

Dialogue opens the possibility of reaching a better solution than any of the original solutions.

Debate defends one's own positions as the best solution and excludes other solutions.

Dialogue creates an open-minded attitude: an openness to being wrong and an openness to change.

Debate creates a closed-minded attitude, a determination to be right.

In dialogue, one submits one's best thinking, knowing that other peoples' reflections will help improve it rather than destroy it.

In debate, one submits one's best thinking and defends it against challenge to show that it is right.

Dialogue calls for temporarily suspending one's beliefs.

Debate calls for investing wholeheartedly in one's beliefs.

In dialogue, one searches for basic agreements.

In debate, one searches for glaring differences.

In dialogue, one searches for strengths in the other positions.

In debate, one searches for flaws and weaknesses in the other position.

Dialogue involves a real concern for the other person and seeks to not alienate or offend.

Debate involves a countering of the other position without focusing on feelings or relationship and often belittles or deprecates the other person.

Dialogue assumes that many people have pieces of the answer and that together they can put them into a workable solution.

Debate assumes that there is a right answer and that someone has it.

Dialogue remains open-ended.

Debate implies a conclusion.

Adapted from a paper prepared by Shelley Berman, which was based on discussions of the Dialogue Group of the Boston Chapter of Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR). Other members included Lucile Burt, Dick Mayo-Smith, Lally Stowell, and Gene Thompson. For more information on ESR's programs and resources using dialogue as a tool for dealing with controversial issues, call the national ESR office at (617) 492-1764.

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION AND ACTION

Bibliography on racism and race relations in America

Editor's note: This bibliography offers a sampling of available works on the topic of race in the United States. This list was selected primarily from recent works to reflect aspects of the current national dialogue. In addition, many of these sources were very helpful to us as we developed this guide.

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Organizations working on race issues

Editor's note: This is only a sampling of the many organizations working around the nation to address today's race issues. All offer assistance to the public and can provide referrals.

A World of Difference Institute
Anti-Defamation League
823 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017
(212) 885-7800; fax (212) 490-0187
www.adl.org
A World of Difference Institute is a national education project, created by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) in 1985, which is designed to combat prejudice and to promote the value of diversity. Founded in 1913, ADL fights anti-Semitism and works to secure fair treatment for all people. In elementary and secondary schools, on college campuses and in neighborhoods, in private industry and in public agencies, A World of Difference educates and prepares students and adults for life in a culturally and racially diverse country. (For more information, please contact the regional office near you. And ask about ADL's resource catalog.)

Alliance For National Renewal
National Civic League
1445 Market Street, Suite 300
Denver, CO 80202-1728
(303) 571-4343
www.ncl.org/anr
The Alliance For National Renewal (ANR) is a network of more than 150 community-building organizations working to address the serious issues facing America and its communities. Founded in 1994, the Alliance is a unique resource that can quickly link you to some of the most important and innovative organizations working to revitalize our society. Also inquire about The Kitchen Table Newsletter, ANR's Community Resource Manual, and booklets on special projects.

Center for Living Democracy
289 Fox Farm Road
Brattleboro, VT 05301
(802) 254-1234; fax (802) 254-1227
www.livingdemocracy.org
The Center for Living Democracy (CLD) promotes the ideas, skills, and practices of democracy. CLD recently published Bridging the Racial Divide: A Report on Interracial Dialogue in America. The report, which presents the results of a year-long, nationwide survey of interracial dialogue groups, presents findings that indicate that "hundreds of thousands of Americans in at least 30 states are currently engaging in sustained, serious, community-based interracial dialogues." Contact the Center for information about this report and other programs and services offered by CLD, including the American News Service, an interactive television series called "Grassroots Journal," training workshops, guides and action tools.

Center for New Black Leadership
815 Fifteenth Street NW, Suite 930 N
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 638-0651; fax (202) 638-0652
cnbl@aol.com
www.CNBL.org
The Center for New Black Leadership (CNBL) is a research and advocacy institute that seeks to provide leadership on public policy issues with racial dimensions. To build strong civic institutions and to promote economic development, the Center advances a vision of self-reliance, focusing much of its work on community-based and market-oriented solutions. The Center is involved in multiple projects and produces influential publications and conferences — ranging from symposia, legal briefs, and a speakers' bureau, to scholarly essays and papers, news releases and other media work, and a periodic journal — all designed to encourage a civil debate on policies affecting the black community.

Civic Practices Network
Center for Human Resources
Brandeis University
60 Turner Street
Waltham MA 02154
(617) 736-4890; fax (617) 736-3773
www.cpn.org
The Civic Practices Network (CPN) is an online journal that brings together innovators and educators to share the tools, stories, and best practices of community empowerment and civic renewal. Contact CPN or log on to its website to learn about civic work and learning taking place around the country: real life stories, practical tools, essays, studies, manuals (including study circle discussion materials), and more.

Hope in the Cities
1103 Sunset Avenue
Richmond, VA 23221
(804) 358-1764; fax (804) 358-1769
102732.1363@compuserve.com
The success of interracial work in Richmond, Virginia, led to Hope in the Cities' national initiative to "heal the heart of America" through honest conversation on race, reconciliation and responsibility. Citizens in cities around the country are signing up. Publications, videos, networking, support services, and more are available.

Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund
634 South Spring Street, 11th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90014
Contact: Communications Department
(213) 629-2512; fax (213) 629-3120
Founded in 1968 in San Antonio, Texas, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) works on behalf of Latinos to safeguard civil rights, to advance political participation, to improve educational opportunities, and to offer a positive vision of full participation in American society. MALDEF pursues these objectives in a variety of ways — including advocacy, community education, research, leadership development, scholarship awards for law school and communications, and, when necessary, through legal action.

National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium
1001 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 522
Washington, DC 20036
Contact: Gautam Rana, Legal Fellow
(202) 296-2300; fax (202) 296-2318
The National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium (NAPALC) works to advance the legal and civil rights of the nation's 9.7 million Asian Pacific Americans through litigation, advocacy, public education, and public policy. With its affiliates — the Asian Pacific American Legal Center in Los Angeles, the Asian Law Caucus in San Francisco, and the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund in New York — the Consortium strives to increase community education and participation on public policy and civil rights issues. NAPALC serves as a national information network, and creates programs that serve Asian Pacific Americans across the nation. (Be sure to ask about the NAPALC Community Partners Network.)

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
4805 Mt. Hope Drive
Baltimore, MD 21215
(410) 358-8900; fax (410) 486-9255
The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) works to achieve equal rights through the democratic process and eliminate racial prejudice by removing racial discrimination in housing, employment, voting, schools, the courts, transportation, recreation, prisons, and business enterprises. The NAACP has a number of important programs that address educational excellence, voter empowerment, civil rights, youth and college and economic development. For more information contact the NAACP or visit their website at www.naacp.org.

National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise
1424 Sixteenth Street NW
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: (202) 518-6500
Fax: (202) 588-0314
E-mail: info@ncne.com
www.ncne.com
Since 1981, the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise (NCNE) — a nonpartisan, nonprofit research and demonstration organization — has focused its work on empowering low-income Americans. NCNE works with neighborhood-based organizations to reduce crime and violence, restore families, create economic enterprise and employment, and revitalize low-income communities. NCNE accomplishes this mission by identifying and supporting neighborhood "healing agents" who are finding solutions to the problems in their communities, by offering training and technical assistance, by connecting grass-roots work with public policy, and by helping to inform people of sources of support outside their communities.

The National Conference
71 Fifth Avenue, Suite 1100
New York, NY 10003
(212) 206-0006; fax (212) 255-6177
The National Conference (NC) — founded in 1927 as The National Conference of Christians and Jews — is a human relations organization dedicated to fighting bias, bigotry, and racism in America. Contact the national office or one of the many regional offices for information about public programs, community dialogues, prejudice reduction workshops, workplace diversity programs, publications and school curriculum.

National Council of La Raza
1111 19th Street NW, Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20036
Contact: Carmen Joge, Civil Rights Policy Analyst
(202) 785-1760; fax (202) 776-1792
The National Council of La Raza (NCLR) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization established in 1968 to reduce poverty and discrimination, and to improve life opportunities for Hispanic Americans. NCLR works toward this goal through two primary, complementary approaches: capacity-building assistance to support and strengthen Hispanic community-based organizations; and applied research, policy analysis, and advocacy. NCLR strengthens these efforts with public information, media activities, and special and international projects.

National Endowment for the Humanities
1100 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20506
Public Information Office: (202) 606-8400
info@neh.fed.us
Division of Public Programs: (202) 606-8267
publicpgms@neh.fed.us
NEH Main # (800) NEH-1121; TDD (202) 606-8282
www.neh.fed.us
The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) is an independent federal agency that supports research, education, preservation projects, and public programs in the humanities. In addition to granting funds, NEH and its State Humanities Councils are valuable resources for information about programs, speakers, publications, exhibitions, and other resources for exploring American history and culture. Inquire about the bibliographies, conversation kits, resource guides, radio programs, and other resources that were produced by grantees of a recent initiative called the "National Conversation on American Pluralism and Identity."

National Institute for Dispute Resolution
1726 M Street NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20036-4502
(202) 466-4764; fax (202) 466-4769
nidr@nidr.org; www.nidr.org
National Institute for Dispute Resolution (NIDR) focuses its expertise, resources, and technical assistance on consensus building and conflict resolution. NIDR helps both providers and consumers of these services deepen their respective capacities to use consensus building and conflict resolution tools effectively. NIDR's Collaborative Communities Program focuses on helping communities use these powerful tools in pursuit of sustainability.

National Issues Forums
100 Commons Road
Dayton, OH 45459-2777
(800) 433-7834; fax (937) 439-9804
www.nifi.org/
National Issues Forums (NIF) publishes issue booklets to aid balanced discussion of public policy alternatives as they relate to important social issues, such as immigration, poverty, affirmative action, the economy, education, and more. The material is geared for use in classroom debates, group discussions, individual reading, preparation of speeches and term papers, and community forums. Call NIF to inquire about the booklets and other publications and programs.

National Urban League
120 Wall Street
New York, NY 10005
Contact person: M. Denise Dennis
(212) 558-5311; fax (212) 344-5189
Founded in 1910, the National Urban League (NUL) is a front-ranking social service and civil rights organization in America. The League is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, community-based movement, headquartered in New York City with professionally staffed affiliates in 115 cities and 34 states and the District of Columbia. The mission of the Urban League movement is to help African-Americans attain social and economic equality. The fundamental objective of the National Urban League is to enable those who are striving toward the mainstream to achieve economic self-reliance and to enjoy their rights as equal citizens under the law.

Southern Regional Council
133 Carnegie Way, Suite 900
Atlanta, GA 30303-1024
(404) 522-8764; fax (404) 522-8791
src@mindspring.com
www.src.wl.com
The mission of the Southern Regional Council (SRC) is to promote racial justice, protect democratic rights, and broaden civic participation in the Southern United States. Building on a legacy of innovative work for racial equality, SRC's strategic plan includes establishing a Partnership for Interracial Unity which engages local communities in creating the capacity to make real progress toward educational, political, and economic equality. SRC' projects include Will the Circle Be Unbroken?: A Personal History of the Civil Rights Movement in Five Southern Communities. This 13-hour radio documentary series tells the stories of over 250 men, women and children who watched and made — and sometimes tried to stop — the movement toward racial integration. (SRC has a website devoted to the radio series, http://unbrokencircle.org.)

Southern Christian Leadership Conference
334 Auburn Avenue NE
Atlanta, GA 30312
(404) 522-1420; fax (404) 524-7957
Founded by Martin Luther King, Jr., Ralph David Abernathy, Sr., Joseph E. Lowery and others in 1957, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) is a nonsectarian civil rights organization which works to promote human rights nationwide and abroad, advance Christian principles, and foster direct action programs to end discrimination. SCLC encourages nonviolent resistance to all forms of racial injustice, operates and sponsors leadership training programs, and sponsors citizenship-education schools. To promote nonviolence, SCLC organizes initiatives including gun buybacks with its "Stop the Killing, End the Violence" program. The organization also conducts Crusade for the Ballot, in the effort to "get out the vote" to double the Black vote throughout the South by increased voter registrations.

Study Circles Resource Center
P.O. Box 203, 697 Pomfret Street
Pomfret, CT 06258
(860) 928-2616; fax (860) 928-3713
scrc@neca.com

The Study Circles Resource Center (SCRC) helps communities use study circles — small group, democratic, highly participatory discussions — to involve large numbers of citizens in public dialogue and problem solving on critical issues such as race, crime, education, American pluralism, and youth issues. SCRC staff members work with community leaders at every stage of creating a community-wide study circle program: helping organizers network between communities; working to develop strong coalitions within communities; advising on material development; and writing letters of support for funding proposals. SCRC also provides free discussion materials to organizers of carefully designed community-wide study circle programs. (Please call for more information or assistance with your study circle program.)

Young Women's Christian Association of the U.S.A.
350 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10118
(212) 273-7800; fax (212) 273-7909

For nearly 100 years, the mission of the Young Women's Christian Association of the U.S.A. (YWCA-USA) focused on the empowerment of women. At the 1970 National Convention, the following was added to the Mission statement: "The Association will thrust its collective power toward the elimination of racism wherever it exists and by any means necessary." Local associates number over 350 across all 50 states; contact the YWCA in your community. The YW often plays a central role in sponsoring and organizing community-wide study circle programs.

Acknowledgements

We want to thank the many community leaders who took the first and second editions of *"Can't We All Just Get Along?" A Manual for Discussion Programs on Racism and Race Relations* and turned them into real programs. Putting these materials to work, they helped us to learn valuable lessons about the challenges and rewards of organizing democratic discussions on race relations. We hope we have successfully incorporated those lessons into the third edition of this guide.

For their contributions to this third edition, we want to thank Pat Scully and Reem Ghandour of the Congressional Exchange, University of Connecticut Professor Daryl Harris, and Regina M. Dougherty. Thank you also to Ruth Sokolowski and her excellent staff. In addition, Eunice LaFate has allowed us to reprint her artwork in this edition. The painting which appears on the back cover was inspired by her participation in study circles. It is a powerful addition to this guide.

We are especially grateful to ten study circle organizers who allowed us to interview them at great length. They shared observations about how the second edition worked in practice, and provided suggestions about ways to improve the guide. Many heartfelt thanks to Mary Jane Hollis, Mike Crockett, Nancy Flinchbaugh, Stephen Thom, Jim Henson, Joe Minarik, Adam Roth, Ashley Walker, Mike Morris, and Trudy Be[illegible]

For their willingness to try out drafts of this new guide, thank you to Ann and John Geer (Springfield, MA), Stan Bratton (Buffalo, New York), Ernest Jones (Bridgeport, CT), Ashley Walker (San Diego, CA), and Linda Zralek (Nashville, TN). We learned a great deal from your reviews of the materials and from your observations of the field-tests.

We also asked many of our organizers of pilot and full-scale study circle programs on race and race relations to complete a questionnaire. They told us about their experiences and the outcomes of their study circles, and offered sage advice to people who want to start new programs. The input from these community leaders is the core of the new Session 5. Unquestionably, their first-hand knowledge and their seasoned contributions to this edition affirm that this guide is a living document.

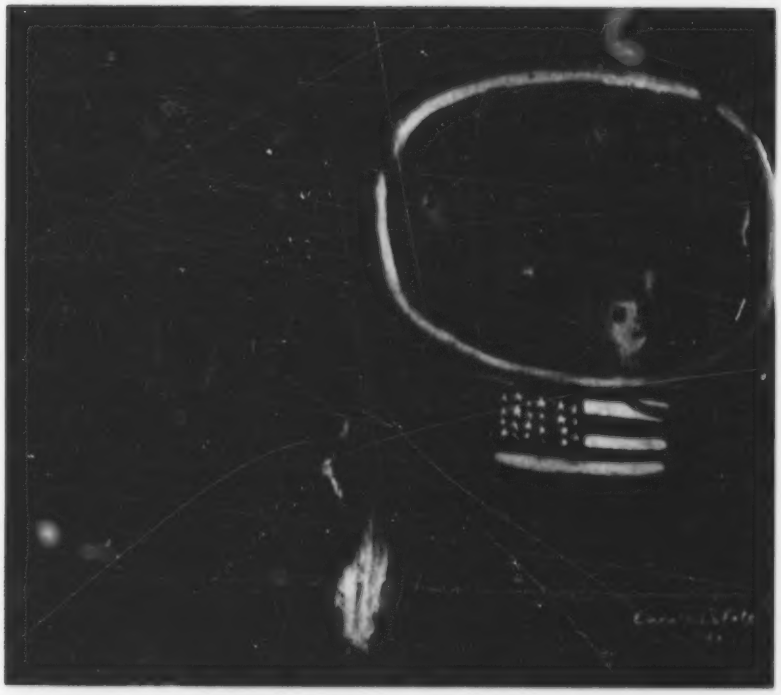
For her recent detailed feedback on the first edition of the guide, thank you to Dottye Burke-Markowitz.

For their contributions to the second edition, we remain grateful to Kendahl Craig of the Hispanic Health Council in Hartford, CT, and Derek Okubo of the National Civic League.

In addition, we want to acknowledge those who gave thoughtful suggestions as we developed the first edition: Arlene Q. Allen; Marya Axner; Diane Balser; Carol Howard; Jerry Dillenbeck; Mark Harrison; Betsy Hasegawa; Sonja Lattimore; Robert Leavitt; Rick Morrison; Linda Nelson; Asukwo N'tuen.

We continue to appreciate the work of Pat Rector and Beth Broadway, who developed the abridged version of the first edition of *Can't We All Just Get Along?* for Laubach Literacy Action in Syracuse, NY. Their clarifications were useful in our writing of the second edition. And Marya Axner's observations on cultural diversity as she developed the Community Leadership Project curriculum for Topsfield Foundation contributed much to this work.

Finally, thank you to Paul Aicher, SCRC founder and Topsfield president, for his visionary leadership, and to SCRC staff members Sally Campbell and Matt Leighninger for their thoughtful responses to many drafts during this guide's evolution.



The Melting Pot vs. The Salad Bowl — Inspired by the artist's participation in study circles on race relations. After taking part in study circles in New Castle County, Delaware, Eunice LaFate — a local artist who specializes in Caribbean folk art and modern art — was inspired to paint a series dedicated to the theme of racial harmony. This is one of Ms. LaFate's works.

Copyright 1997, Eunice LaFate. Picture courtesy of the artist.